The Fan Magazine for Golden Age and Silver Age Collectors

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

No. 14
$2.95 U.S.A. $3.50 Canada

A BRAVE AND BOLD SPECIAL ISSUE!

Turning tryouts into triumphs... a retrospective of DCs classic and rare title, including:

THE LEGENDARY ARTISTS
of the early B & B
by Richard Halogua

THE RARITY & THE DEMAND
Issues #23-62
by Gary M. Carter

CAVE CARSON
and other
Under-the-ground comics
by Michael Naiman

AND MORE!

All covers ©DC Comics 1992

BULK RATE
U.S.POSTAGE
PAID
CORONADO, CA
PERMIT NO. 2693

The Fan Magazine for Golden Age and Silver Age Collectors

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

No. 14
$2.95 U.S.A. $3.50 Canada

A BRAVE AND BOLD SPECIAL ISSUE!

Turning tryouts into triumphs... a retrospective of DCs classic and rare title, including:

THE LEGENDARY ARTISTS
of the early B & B
by Richard Halegua

THE RARITY & THE DEMAND
Issues #23-62
by Gary M. Carter

CAVE CARSON
and other
Under-the-ground comics
by Michael Naiman

AND MORE!

All covers ©DC Comics 1998

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
CORONADO, CA
PERMIT NO. 2693

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FEATURES

The Art of the Brave and the Bold
Richard Halegua talks about the great Brave & Bold artists and their contributions to Silver Age history 12

The Brave and The Bold #23-62
Survey results on the relative rarity and demand 20

Under-The-Ground Comics
Michael Naiman take us on a comic book journey to "the Land beneath the ground" 26

Classic Illustrated & The Mysterious "HRN"
Dan Malan explains how to tell the Classic Comics originals from the reprints 40

COLUMNS

Adventures Into Weird Words
Dropping the "Bomb" on Comics by Pat Calhoun 9

The Fandom Zone
Alan Dulfon Interviews the legendary Stan Lee in 1972!..33

Lee's Soapbox
Let the reader beware. Lee Hester gives "advice" (gulp) to would be comic shop owners 46

The Scarcity of Golden Age DC
Dr. Pat Kochanek quantifies More Fun Comics 50

Forgotten Funny Animals of the 1950s
Steve Sibra lets the Royal Cat out of the bag! 54

Fandom Flashbacks
Erik Andresen dredges up quotable quotes from fanzines of the past 64

One of the most recognized and fondly remembered comic books of the Silver Age, *The Brave And The Bold* #31 is among the most famous of all "under-the-ground" comics **...SEE PAGE 22**

DEPARTMENTS

A Letter From The Editor 6

Marketplace Mail 62

Subscriptions $19.95

Back Issues-Call (619) 435-6645

The COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE is published by Marketplace Publications, all rights reserved under International and Pan-American copyright conventions. The information in this publication is protected under U.S. copyright law. Absolutely no part of this publication may be reproduced in any form, mechanically, photographically, or electronically, without prior written consent from the publisher. Inquiries (including advertising) and letters to the editor should be addressed to: *The COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE*, P.O. Box 180900, Coronado, CA 92178-0900 or call (619) 435-6645. Office hours: 9:00 a.m. til 5:00 p.m. Pacific time, Monday through Friday. 12 issue subscription rate: $19.95, First Class Sub. (mailed in an envelope) $36, Canadian: $36, in US funds, Overseas: $60 in US funds. All articles are the express opinion of the individual contributing artists and authors, and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of *The COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE*, its staff, or its advertisers. All Comic Book characters, names, logos, trademarks, and symbols depicted and described in research and fan articles are owned and copyrighted by the individual companies. Advertising and Subscription rates may change without notice. Printed in the USA.

Issue Number 14, June, 1992

A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The new and the old... the Brave and the Bold...

Starting with this issue, *The Comic Book Marketplace* has a new logo, thanks to the able talents of Joe Sikoryak. Joe and I felt that since comic books collecting is CBM 's focus, the words "Comic Book" ought to be an easily seen component of the cover. Let me know what you think, I'm anxious to hear your opinion! Besides a "new look" on the cover, this issue contains articles by several new *CBM* contributors who are joining us for the first time... I hope you'll join me in saying "welcome".

I think our articles this month are really great. Rich Halegua and Michael Naiman have contributed essays which touch on a topics that I've been hoping they would write for some time now. Both pieces intersect on a title that is near and dear to my heart, namely DC's wonderful and highly collectible "tryout" magazine, *The Brave and the Bold*. not only is *B&B* of special interest to me because of its rich history. but also because it was one of my all time favorites back when I was riding my skateboard to the newsstand with popsicle in hand and dimes in pocket. Publishing these articles that talk about *B&B* also provides an excellent excuse for me to throw in my two cents with "The Relative Rarity and Demand of Brave and Bold #23-62". I've wanted to look at DC's "other" famous tryout title of the Silver Age since we examined *Showcase #1-40* way back in *CBM* #3 (was it really that long ago?). I believe Silver Age collectors will find the data both valuable as well as interesting. I know I did.

Three final notes: First, I want to welcome Bengt Helenius, our first CBM subscriber from Finland. I am still totally amazed at the number of European subscribers. Secondly, I'd like to personally salute CBM subscriber number 00001—Steve Reizner, owner of the Comic Gallery comic shop chain here in San Diego. Thanks Steve for risking your twelve bucks long before we even had a magazine to show you. And finally, thanks to all the collectors across the country, both old and new who have helped so much to make CBM a success. Happy collecting...

Gary

Gary M. Carter

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

Gary M. Carter
editor in chief & publisher

Lisa M. Carter
business & design director

Eva Ditler
Betty McChesney
Michael Rabin
editorial assistants

Joe Sikoryak
design consultant

Mark Yturralde
technical consultant

Jody Sims
Michele Humphrey
design & graphics associates

Michael Naiman
editor-at-large

Bill Howard
magazine consultant

contributing writers
Erik Andresen, Jon Berk, William Bernhardt, Geoffrey Blum, Pat S. Calhoun, Steve Carey, Susan Cicconi, Bill Cole, J. Keith Contarino, Larry Curcio, Shel Dorf, Steve Duin, Alan Dulfon, Joe Dungan, Creig Flessel, Christopher Forbes, Tom French, Jeff Gelb, Rich Halegua, Bruce Hamilton, Lee Hester, Bill Howard, Rob Hughes, Pat Kochanek, Steve Kortus, Michael Lynn, Sean Linkenback, Dan Malan, Duncan McAlpine, Michael Naiman, Bob Nastasi, Michelle Nolan, Bob Overstreet, Nelson Patterson, Jim Payette, Mike Potter, Joe Rainone, Todd Reznik, Tim Riley, Charlie Roberts, Robert Roter, Michael Sanches, Steve Sibra, John Snyder, Tony Starks, John Townsend, Ted Vanliew, Gerard Voland, Mark Wilson, Jerry Weist, & Nicky Wright.

Dropping the Bomb on Comics...

***Weird Science* #5 (Jan-Feb 1951) shows writer/editor/artist Al Feldstein in good form. He also illustrates the lead story in this issue. ©EC**

The dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 hastened the end of World War II and also registered a profound impact upon the modern psyche. It soon became obvious that this new weaponry constituted a palpable threat to everyone, everywhere... To paraphrase Pogo; "We have met the enemy, and it is us."

In *Captain Marvel* #66 (Oct 1946), Cap faced a nuclear nightmare in a story almost unique in its portrayal of the super-suffering of a super-hero. When an all-out atomic war wipes out all life on earth, Captain Marvel alone survives — helpless in his hopeless despair. Of course it's just a TV drama brought to us by Billy Batson and station WHIZ, but to say that the story makes its point is a vast understatement.

Concomitant with this "fear of frying" was a new

respect for the powers of science. This would culminate in a science-fiction frenzy in the early 1950's. Magazines like *Galaxy* and *Fantasy And Science Fiction*, movies like "Day the Earth Stood Still" and "War of the Worlds", and plenty of comic books fed a public hungry for adventures in deep space and far futures.

The EC titles *Weird Science* and *Weird Fantasy*, were the first to perfect the sci-fi format. *Weird Science* #5 (Jan-Feb 1951) features two tales of atomic Armageddon. In the cover story, descendants of those who escaped annihilation by building a huge rocket ship and heading out into space, return to earth to find a new civilization discovering nuclear technology... This cyclical history, though not dramatic or surprising, still satisfies, guided by the sure hand of exemplary artist, Wally Wood.

And Harvey Kurtzman contributes a classic, the incredibly ironic "Last War on Earth", which begins with two Irish brothers fighting over a girl named Katey Mulrooney, and ends in an interplanetary war between Earth and Mars.

Our third atomic offering comes from a company that has patiently endured its reputation as second string, despite the fact that it just ain't so. True, ACG (American Comics Group) did begin a long slow decline after the comics code crippled the industry in 1955, but the pre-code stuff is extremely good. The stories (mostly the brainchildren of editor Richard Hughes) are solidly scripted and thoughtful, and often full of old-fashioned charm and human warmth. ACG can also claim credit for the first continuously published fantasy title, *Adventures Into The Unknown*, which began a twenty-year, 174 issue, run in the fall of 1948.

Forbidden Worlds was a fantasy title too, but they ran occasional S-F. This ish, #14 (Feb 1953), cover features the lead story, "Million-Year Monster". In this yarn an A-blast uncovers a dinosaur egg. Of course the darn thing is ready to

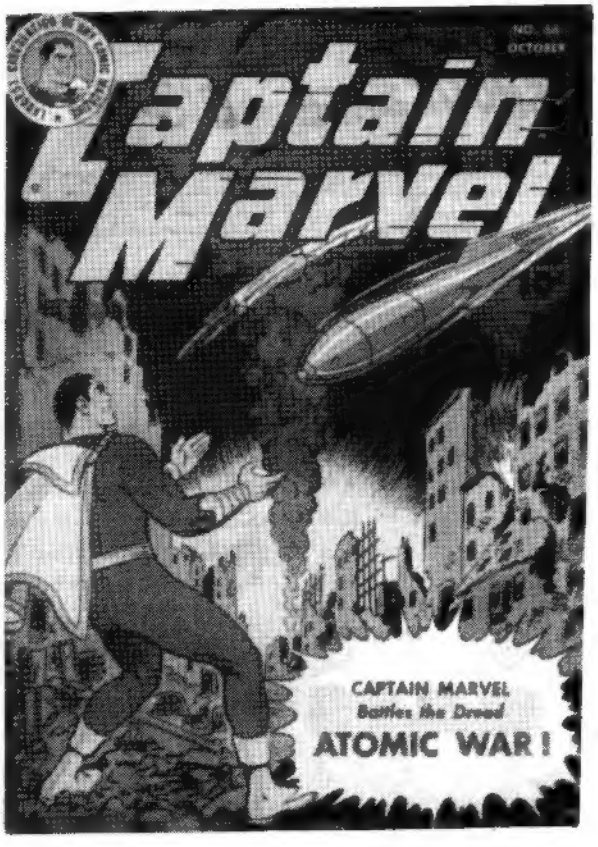
continued on page 10

continued from page 9

hatch, and, needless to say, heavy radiation has induced heavy mutation. The million years of misguided evolution that the bomb has bestowed, results in a creature that will talk at you in "pidgin" English before it bites your head off. Throw in the ACG framework of the scientist, his beautiful daughter, and her fast-thinking fiancé, and you've got an eight page feast of extravagant melodrama. And somewhere in there the idea glimmers that the gene pool is a fragile environment, and that messing with it is "Russian roulette"...

I do think that post-war through pre-code is really a well-defined era of comics. These were certainly the most adult comics, when the "genres" flourished, and when the kind of art fondly referred to as Good-Girl-Art was at its peak. Nestled between the two heroic ages are the books that became martyrs because they "stimulated violent tendencies and sexual tendencies" and maybe even intellectual tendencies.

And, as the cold war escalated in the latter 1950s, the USA and USSR both built huge nuclear arms stockpiles, in a game of economic attrition that would end with both sides being big losers. Even the chastened post code comics occasionally managed to confront the resulting paranoia, most notably in DC's tales of the "Atomic Knights". This



series began in *Strange Adventures* #117 (Jun 1960), and appeared in every third issue through #160 (Jan 1964). The symbolism of these post-nuclear-holocaust adventurers, who discover that ancient suits of armor offer protection from the rampant radiation, is as mind-boggling to me today as it was to me as a child over thirty years ago. This series is silver that will not tarnish; a genuine offering of hope for the human spirit. ■

***Above – Captain Marvel* #66 (Oct 1946) is one of the last Fawcett's with the slightly heavier cover stock. The famous Superman/A-Bomb cover of *Action* #101 is also dated October 1946. ©Fawcett**

***Left – Forbidden Worlds* #14 (Feb 1953) represents ACG at its peak of pre-code fantasy production- with four titles on the stands. They would match this number several times in later years, including the last *Gasp* (#4 August 1967) when ACG ceased publication. ©ACG**

The Art of the Brave

Original Art for the cover of *Brave & Bold* #36 (Jul 1961) ©DC
Courtesy R. Halegua collection

Original Russ Heath Art used as the splash page for the Golden Gladiator story, Brave & Bold #1 (Sep 1955) ©DC
(Also used as an inset on the cover)
Courtesy R. Halegua collection.

and the Bold

by **Richard Halegua**

It was summer 1955. DC, the comic's publishing powerhouse, was about to implement new strategies aimed at producing new titles and increasing sales. One of the first things they would do would be to release *The Brave and the Bold*. The title was a package of "hero" type stories, but with a slant. They were all historical heroes and the roster was quite impressive! Robin Hood, the Golden Gladiator, The Viking Prince, and The Silent Knight. But even more impressive was the roster of artists who drew the stories for this all time classic title.

The first 24 issues, which features the aforementioned characters, are illustrated by comic greats **Joe Kubert** (Viking Prince), **Russ Heath** (Golden Gladiator and Silent Knight) and **Nick Certo** (Robin Hood). Of these characters, Kubert's Viking Prince and Heath's Silent Knight have emerged as the most popular and most collected.

Joe Kubert had worked for DC since about 1942, first as an assistant to Mort Meskin, then finally graduating to the Hawkman stories in *Flash Comics*. For a period, he moved his drawing board over to St. John where he worked with Norman Maurer on the editing and illustrating of all of their titles, but mostly producing and packaging titles in their entirety for St. John. *Hollywood Romances*, *Three Stooges* , and his own creation, the caveman hero *TOR* were among the titles they produced. But the McCarthy era "witch hunt" on comic books had taken its toll at St. John, reducing it's comics publishing output so drastically by 1955 that Joe moved back to DC entirely (where he continues to draw war stories until this time).

When Bob Kanigher wrote the original Viking Prince script, Joe got the nod for the art and created an immortal character; Joe's version of Hal Foster's Prince Valiant. Of the first 24 issues of *Brave and Bold*, only one issue is missing a Viking Prince story. Over the course of these issues, one can see the Viking Prince strip being transformed with the maturation of Kubert's style and brush stroke. His feathering became more controlled, while at the same time his style became looser, more electric. By *Brave And Bold* #20, Viking Prince had become the lead feature (he was the last feature in #1). These five stories from *Brave and Bold* #20 to 24 are hailed as milestones, because of Kubert's excellent renderings and Kanigher's entertaining scripts.

The Silent Knight and Golden Gladiator were the other top features in *Brave And Bold* illustrated by Russ Heath, whose straight forward, realistic style was as perfectly suited for these strips as Kubert's visceral, dynamic style was suited to Viking Prince. Both of them employed generous portions of "blacks" (black ink), highlighting the artistic composition of the pages. Gritty stuff, Joe and Russ' characters all probably have dirt under their fingernails!

Russ had come to DC in 1950, where he freelanced while working at a plethora of comics publishers including Holyoke, Lev Gleason, St. John, Quality, Avon, Chesler and Fawcett. There he inked Dan Barry's pencils on the Golden Arrow strip. He also did some stories for EC (mainly war), and at Atlas (Marvel) he did westerns including *Kid Colt*.

Of these, the westerns and war stories were best, probably because of his approach towards realism. This "realistic" style added a sense of actuality to the stories. This worked to benefit the Silent Knight and the Golden Gladiator's, considering their pseudo-historic story lines. Again, both characters contain tremendous resemblance to the Prince Valiant strip. They were not sword and sorcery strips, which Viking Prince tended towards, with its encounters with mermaids, wizards, and giant spiders, truly the things of fantasy.

The two Heath masterpieces were more believable in the historic sense. Golden Gladiator was the "Ben-Hur" of comics. Indeed, the first story from *Brave And*

The Viking Prince
THIS IS NOT A VIKING! BUT-- A SPARROW! HO! HO!
THEN FEEL THE SHARP BEAK OF THE SPARROW!
MIGHTIEST OF ALL THE HORSEMEN, IS THE GOLDEN-HAIRED VIKING PRINCE -- YET THE DAY COMES WHEN THIS MIGHTY VIKING BECOMES A MITE OF ELFIN SIZE -- A CREATURE HUNTED BY GIANTS AGAINST WHOM HIS STRENGTH IS THAT OF A SPARROW! BUT THOUGH HIS SIZE IS DIMINISHED -- HIS COURAGE REMAINS CONSTANT -- AS HIS ENEMIES LEARN WHEN BATTLING ...
the INVISIBLE VIKING!

Original Art splash page by Joe Kubert for the Viking Prince story published in Brave & Bold #22 (Mar 1959) ©DC Courtesy R. Halegua collection.

Bold # 1 shows the gladiator riding his chariot, shield upraised to defend himself from the attack of his "Masala". The accuracy of Heath's Roman armor, his chariots and his ancient cities are legendary and show what must be a great interest in ancient cultures.

Heath's Silent Knight was in the mid ground between Gladiator and Viking. The continuity vacillated between more fantasy and no fantasy, depending on which issue you read. He could be parrying sword with the Black Knight, or he could be facing a clock's mechanical men. Heath's detailed and stylized approach handled both easily.

Finally, there was Robin Hood and his merry men. Ably drawn by the talented Nick Certo, Robin had a cleaner look than Heath's gritty heroes or Kubert's slick ones. Very similar to Silent Knight, the Robin scripts were much more confined to the standard theme of the legendary vigilante. Certo worked well within these boundaries however, and his simpler compositions, though more static than Kubert or Heath, match perfectly the aesthetics of Robin's universe.

The covers are also an interesting amalgam. Issue #1 has, as its cover, a collage of the splash pages to each story inside. Issue #2 is a collaboration between **Mike Sekowsky** and **Gil Kane** before Certo takes over the cover chores from issue #3 through #15. The covers to *B&B* #16 and #17 are done by Sekowsky, and Nick Certo does the covers for issues # 18 - #21. And then Kubert works his cover magic on #22, #23, and the great classic #24. The cover of *B&B* #24 will be famous among collectors as it portrays the image of Viking Prince with the maiden in his arms, while both are entwined in the tentacles of a Kraken. It represents the epitome of the Viking fantasy!

As no doubt you've read elsewhere in this issue, the twenty-fifth issue of the title signaled a major change in content! The success of another DC title, which introduced new characters with each issue, persuaded the editor to re-format *Brave And Bold*. This companion (the "ultra-historic" *Showcase*) initiated publication when *Brave And Bold* was already at issue #5, but the success of *Showcase* would quickly overtake *Brave And Bold*. From the 16 characters introduced in *Showcase*'s first 36 issues, 13 of them were granted their own titles, or became lead features. *Brave And Bold* also introduced many excellent heroes, yet only a few received their own titles.

Though this change actually started with #23 (Viking Prince having the entire issue devoted to him) and #24 (also a cover-to cover Viking Prince book), the Kubert strip was not seen again in a DC comic for almost 15 years! But because of his appearance in *Brave And Bold* from the first issue, #23 and #24 are looked upon as more transitional than the first issues of the format change. Thus, most collectors usually associate the September, 1959 issue (#25) as the first clearly recognizable new format issue, with its now famous introduction of the Suicide Squad. Suicide Squad's artistic chores were handled by the ever qualified team of **Ross Andru** and **Mike Esposito**, who would go on to create the Metal Men three years later in *Showcase* #37.

Brave And Bold #25 also continued what was to become an artistic emblem of comics for the next couple of years. Though "the giant monsters" are commonly attributed to Marvel comics and their horror/fantasy line(*Strange Tales, Tales To Astonish, Tales of Suspense, and Journey Into Mystery*), the truth is that Jack Kirby actually started the ball rolling at DC in 1957 when he did Challengers of the Unknown in *Showcase* #6. This theme of "giant" creatures is clearly evident on several prominent *B&B* issues. *B&B* #22 shows Viking Prince being attacked by a giant Viking, issue #24 shows a giant Kraken and *B&B* #25 shows The Suicide Squad being attacked by an unknown giant claw (a response

Below: Original Art splash page by Russ Heath for the Silent Knight story published in *Brave & Bold* #22 (Mar 1959) ©DC Courtesy R. Halegua collection.

to the American-International film The Claw?), a giant seagull on #26 and on #27 a giant half-human-half-fish giant. This theme continued through the Hawkman tryouts of #34-36 and 42-44.

Andru and Esposito worked well together and had a singular look that lent itself to these fantastic representations. Clean, broad lines that seemed to create a shiny and homogenized illustration. They also drew a stretch of stories in Star Spangled War that had, as the main protagonists, dinosaurs instead of Nazis.

Mike Sekowsky returned to the title with issue #28, and drew the first story in what would become his greatest contribution to comic's history, The Justice League of America.

Consisting of the most well known and popular super-heroes of the DC universe, this "super-team" propelled the silver age of comics forward. Sekowsky's stylized images, though disdained by many*, are actually superb renderings and served this series well. Superior panel layout, and simplified action accented just those images that he wanted you to notice most, free of the distraction of panel clutter. After three issues in *Brave And Bold*, JLA started its own title within the same year - a testament to Sekowsky's "under-rated" talent.

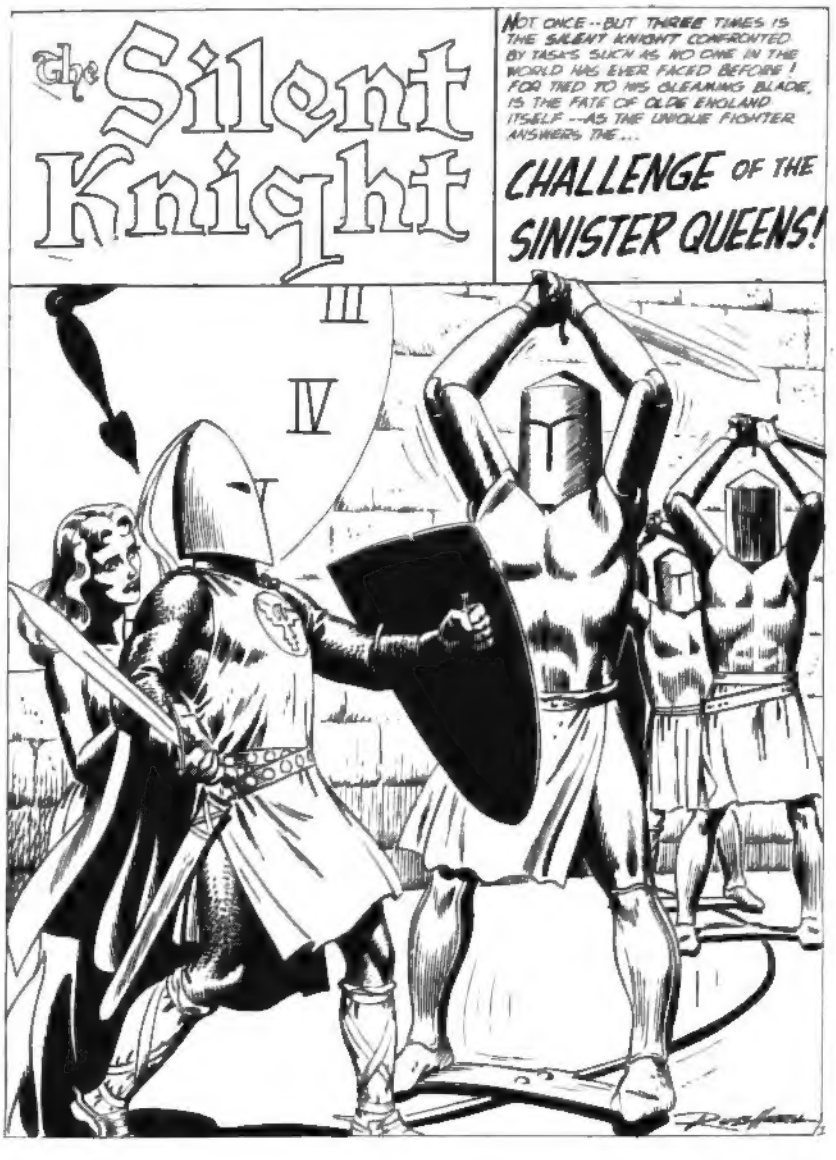
Mort Meskin illustrated three issues with "Cave Carson - Inside Earth". Meskin's history in comics goes way back to 1938, when he broke into the business at the S. M. "Jerry" Iger shop. He moved to DC in 1941 where he created the Vigilante for *Action Comics*, and what many believe is his greatest achievement - Johnny Quick. During the forties, he was assisted by the young Joe Kubert who took over the Wildcat job after Mort left for Nedor in 1946. He came back to DC in 1956.

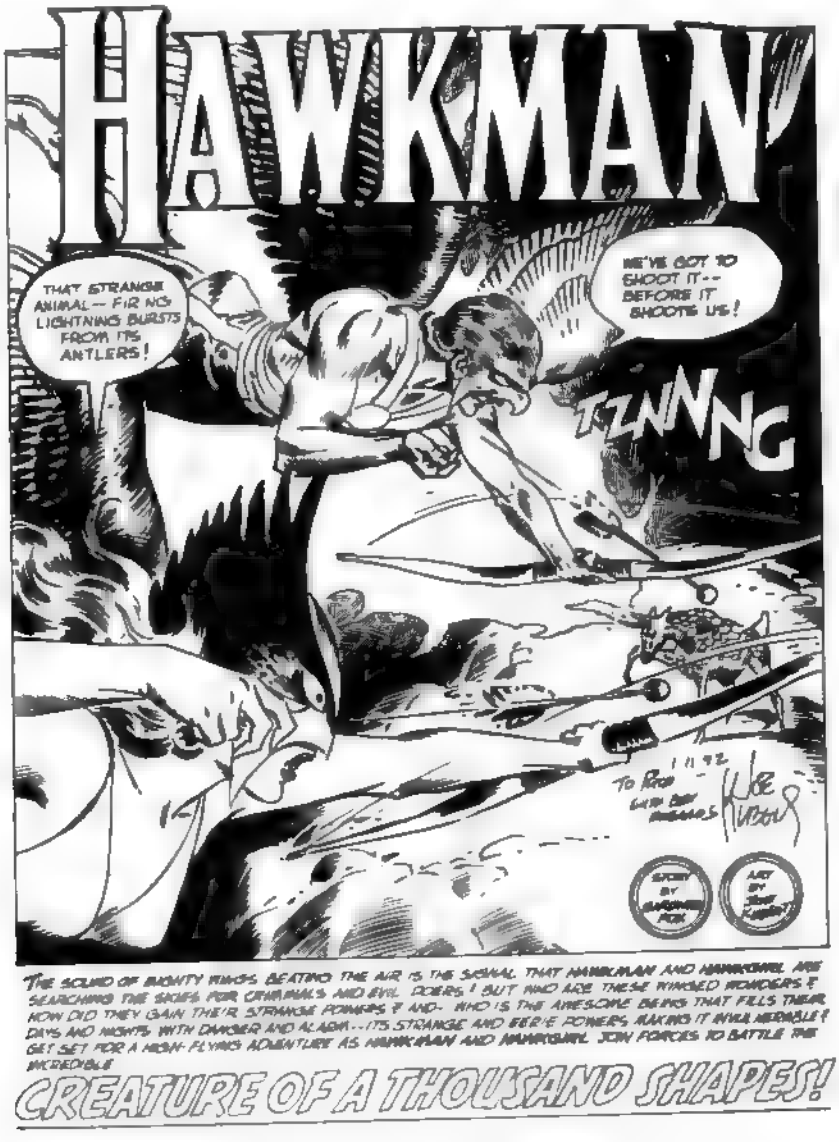
Influenced heavily by Milton Caniff, Noel Sickles and Roy Crane (as are almost half of all comic artists) he propagated their cinematic interpretation of the comic strip. Bold lines, stark blacks, unique design and an electric motion mark the quality of these issues of *Brave And Bold*. They are also qualities appropriately used for the cavernous camera shots used in the stories of subterranean science fiction.

Another coup-de-grace came in the March 1961 ish. Number 34 re-introduced one of the most popular heroes of the Golden Age, the Hawkman!

Julie Schwartz, who was the editor of *Brave And Bold*, felt that the time was right and once again Joe Kubert would illustrate. What resulted are six of the finest comics ever created and possibly some of the most important books of the Silver Age (*Brave And Bold* #34 is certainly among the most important). Kubert's long career was always stellar, but with these stories he reached such great heights it is impossible to measure. They are the crowning points.

A horror story that Joe tells of this period revolves around his Hawkman original art. One day, arriving at the DC offices to drop off some Sgt. Rock pages, he saw DC employees shredding artwork that was around the offices. In the stack they were about to (shudder) destroy were his Hawkman pages from the later *Brave And Bold* stories! Thank heaven Joe got there when he did to save this top notch work from certain destruction.


The Silent Knight
NOT ONCE--BUT THREE TIMES IS THE SILENT KNIGHT CONFRONTED BY TASKS SUCH AS NO ONE IN THE WORLD HAS EVER FACED BEFORE! FOR TIED TO HIS GLEAMING BLADE, IS THE FATE OF OLDE ENGLAND ITSELF --AS THE UNIQUE FIGHTER ANSWERS THE...
CHALLENGE OF THE SINISTER QUEENS!
III
IV


HAWKMAN
THAT STRANGE ANIMAL — FIR NOS LIGHTNING BURSTS FROM ITS ANTLERS!
WE'VE GOT TO SHOOT IT-- BEFORE IT SHOOTS US!
TZNNNG
THE SOUND OF MIGHTY WINGS BEATING THE AIR IS THE SIGNAL THAT HAWKMAN AND HAWKGIRL ARE SEARCHING THE SKIES FOR CRIMINALS AND EVIL DOERS! BUT WHO ARE THESE WINGED WONDERS? HOW DID THEY GAIN THEIR STRANGE POWERS? AND- WHO IS THE AWESOME BEING THAT FELLS THEIR DAYS AND NIGHTS WITH DANGER AND ALARM--ITS STRANGE AND EERIE POWERS MAKING IT ANIMAL MERVILLE? GET SET FOR A HIGH-FLYING ADVENTURE AS HAWKMAN AND HAWKGIRL JOIN FORCES TO BATTLE THE INCREDIBLE
CREATURE OF A THOUSAND SHAPES!

Original Art splash page by Joe Kubert for the Hawkman story published in *Brave & Bold* #34 (Mar 1961) ©DC Considered to be one of the most historically important and valuable pieces of Silver Age original art. Courtesy R. Halegua collection.

collectors. All or most of the Hawkman art exists, and quite a bit of the Viking Prince and Silent Knight pages. Also numerous Sekowsky JLA pages and much more. But some has never been seen! Andru-Esposito Suicide Squad pages, Cave Carson pages, and Strange Sports Stories pages rarely turn up. As Silver Age comics become the hottest ticket around, the artwork heats up too. Already highly sought after, it is quickly becoming nearly impossible to find.

But whatever your collecting and reading interests, the *Brave And Bold* continue to provide us with sometimes great and always fascinating time capsules of the great Silver Age of comics. Its immortal line of characters and the artists who drew them will remain a focus for historians in the years to come. ■

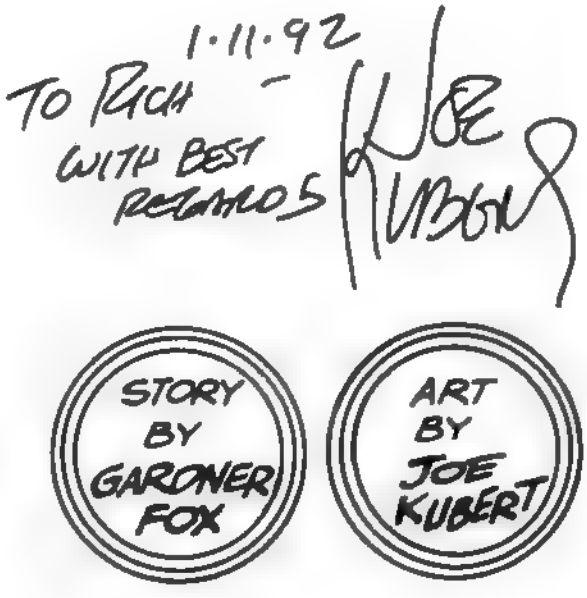
Rich has been collecting Silver Age DC art for almost 20 years, but still needs originals by many artists. If you have any for sale/trade or any that can be Photostatted for research purposes, please let him know! Write to Rich Halegua c/o CBM. "See Harry Thomas' excellent article "In A League Of Their Own" in The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide #20

For five issues entitled "Strange Sports Stories", **Carmine Infantino** and **Murphy Anderson** combined for a series that has become a minor cult classic. Already teamed on the Flash, and doing considerable solo jobs, they created some very enjoyable stories. The track star who ran backwards, the invisible boxer and the jalopy that could beat a race car, just weird but great stuff.

Carmine, a DC artist since 1946, drew with a flair for eccentric lines, bizarre perspectives, and a dynamic motion. The futuristic cities that populated his backgrounds added psychedelic depth to the story line of any story he illustrated.

What might be another of the best (and underrated) stories is in *Brave And Bold* is #53. An Atom - Flash team-up, it is drawn by another of the comic art hall-of-famers, **Alex Toth**. Another of the Sickles-Caniff-Eisner school, Alex' use of black and white, his cinema-noire, is unmatched by any in this medium. This book is another classic in this series.

Much art from this series has surfaced over the years, and, when it does, it is in great demand by



The Relative Rarity and Demand of Brave & Bold 23 - 62

a survey

compiled by
Gary M. Carter

When I first beheld the cover of *The Brave and the Bold* #23 in the newsstand section of the Day-and-Night market in downtown Coronado (California), I immediately noticed that it was very different than the issue I had purchased just two months earlier. The ponderous *Brave & Bold* logo "flag" that usually dominated the top 1/3 of the cover had shrunk to a more manageable size. In fact it seemed almost tiny by comparison to the previous issue. The radical change left the Viking Prince logo (and Joe Kubert's incredible artwork) to dominate this early cover. Many readers that were introduced to the title after the logo reduction were often slow to realize that "The Brave And The Bold" was more than a slogan introducing a DC feature and was actually the title of the magazine!

To be honest, at the time I didn't really comprehend the fact that *B&B* had become the companion "tryout" title to *Showcase*. That realization came with issue #25, The first Suicide Squad. My young brain said "oh yea, DC is trying out neat new stuff in *B&B* now, just like they do in *Showcase*. I wonder what comes after Suicide Squad?" Just three issues later, comic book history would answer my naive question!

To claim that *B&B* is important to Silver Age history is, to say the least, an understatement. The three Justice League issues (28-30) could justify *B&B*'s place in comic book history all by themselves! They introduced the baby boomer generation to the wonders of a comic book with all my favorite characters, all in one story. The previous generation had the privilege of reading *All Star Comics*, and so viewed this super team idea as a "revival". But to kids like me at the turn of the decade, the "team of super heroes" idea was an exciting new concept! As issues 28-30 arrived at the stands every other month for six months, I became more and more enamored. If Showcase #4 was the beginning, surely B&B #28 was the high point. Even to this day, some 30 plus years later, B&B #28 continues to be recognized as one of the all time classic covers of the Silver Age and stands as a newsprint monument to the genius of Julie Schwartz and the DC gang.

Issue #31 (the first Cave Carson) sports another all time classic cover. We who saw it advertised in other DC books of the time were compelled to nearly terminal curiosity at the thought of "living hot lava? I just gotta read that comic!" Many whom I have spoken with in the years since have shared the same fascination with *B&B* #31. There's just something magic about that cover!

Just six short months later, Brave & Bold #34 came flapping my way to prove for all time that *B&B* wasn't just the poor little brother of Showcase. Beyond the fact that this first Hawkman issue is one of the top five most historically important DC books of the Silver Age... beyond the fact that it contains the quintessential Kubert art of all time... beyond the fact that the cover is one of the most striking and memorable of the period... beyond all that, this comic is extremely well written and a genuine pleasure to read. (yep, a few of us still love to read 'em!)

As the *B&B* saga continued, it was eventually overwhelmed by the "everything's-gotta-have-Batman-in-it-to-sell" syndrome.

Issue Number	Feature	'1992 High Book Value	Rank by High Book Value	Rank By Demand	Rank by RARITY in any Grade	Rank by RARITY in VF or Better
23	Viking Prince	$150	7	14	1	5
24	Viking Prince	$125	9	17	5	7
25	Suicide Squad	$100	11	10	2	1
26	Suicide Squad	$80	18	13	3	2
27	Suicide Squad	$80	18	15	4	9
28	Justice League Of America	$2,800	1	1	6	3
29	Justice League Of America	$700	3	3	7	4
30	Justice League Of America	$700	3	5	8	6
31	Cave Carson	$80	18	16	8	10
32	Cave Carson	$80	18	20	10	11
33	Cave Carson	$80	18	24	12	13
34	Hawkman	$450	4	2	11	8
35	Hawkman	$150	7	4	14	12
36	Hawkman	$150	7	6	15	14
37	Suicide Squad	$60	25	23	18	17
38	Suicide Squad	$60	25	27	19	20
39	Suicide Squad	$60	25	29	20	22
40	Cave Carson	$60	25	30	17	19
41	Cave Carson	$60	25	31	16	21
42	Hawkman	$80	18	9	22	16
43	Hawkman	$100	11	7	13	15
44	Hawkman	$80	18	8	21	18
45	Strange Sports Stories	$15	38	36	28	23
46	Strange Sports Stories	$15	38	37	32	25
47	Strange Sports Stories	$15	38	38	33	28
48	Strange Sports Stories	$15	38	39	34	30
49	Strange Sports Stories	$15	38	40	36	31
50	Green Arrow & J'onn J'onzz	$70	20	21	26	33
51	Aquaman & Hawkman	$20	33	26	25	26
52	Sgt. Rock	$20	33	16	24	24
53	The Atom & The Flash	$22	28	33	28	35
54	Teen Titans	$135	8	11	23	27
55	Metal Men & The Atom	$12	40	32	30	34
56	Flash & Martain Manhunter	$12	40	35	40	36
57	Metamorpho	$70	20	12	27	29
58	Metamorpho	$30	28	28	35	36
59	Batman & Green Lantern	$40	27	34	37	32
60	Teen Titans	$50	26	25	31	37
61	Starman & Black Canary	$20	33	19	38	39
62	Starman & Black Canary	$20	33	22	39	40

But nothing can change the wonder and beauty of the "Golden 40" issues. In fact, many (actually most!) are phenomenally low priced. When you look at the data presented here, averaging the opinions of 21 long time *B&B* fans (11 dealers and 12 collectors), it's hard not to notice the amazing low prices on the vast majority of issues. Here's my analysis:

1. As the price of #28 rockets ahead of the pack, it focuses attention on the disparity between it and #29 and #30. There's no doubt that $700 doesn't grow on trees. Yet when compared against the price of the 28, 29 and 30 start looking like the veritable "bargains" of the run. That combined with: (1) many collectors see 29 equally as hard to come by in grade as 28 and (2) the 29 has extreme demand pressure of late because of its wonderful cover. Bottom line: 29 and 30 will be movers and shakers in the coming months.

2. #31 at $80 IS A STEAL!!! Even though it is a first appearance issue, it is not broken out from 32 and 33. And its all time classic cover is beginning to create increased demand as well. Please send any and all *B&B* #31s in VF or better (with white pages) priced at guide to me for immediate payment (chuckle)! And speaking of sleepers, check out the book length Kubert in #40... wowzers!

3. I Know I know... I don't need to tell anyone this, it comes up in darn near every dissertation even remotely related to Silver Age books, but sheeeesh! *B&B* #34 (and, for that matter, all six Hawkman issues) continues to be severely under priced. There are now 7 instances (that I know of) of FN, VF, and NM copies of 34 selling for $900-$1500 dollars and still climbing. Holy Hawk feathers Batman! Scour the country side and check your uncle Harry's attic, because high grade copies are in real demand. Seriously though, it nice to see books like this with high artistic and literary quality get the recognition they deserve after so many years in "hibernation".

4. It would be impossible to ignore the superb content and art of issues 45-49. If you like sports, science fiction, Murphy Anderson, Carmine Infantino, or the DC "look" , these books are gems. And at bargain basement prices.

5. For all the DC war fans, try finding a nice copy of the obscure Sgt. Rock issue (#52). Bargain basement price again!

6. Look at the amazing number of books on the list for $25 or less in NM, i.e. #s 45-49, 51, 52, 53, 55, 56, and most especially #s 61 and 62. If one can find them in decent shape (and that's a big if) and if one can find them for around guide prices (and that's another if) I don't see how a guy could go wrong. And if you are looking for reading copies (everyone of these is a great read), the bargains become exceptionally attractive.

B&B 23-62 has something for every budget and taste: 12 books in the $10-$25 range, 17 books in the $30-$80 range, 7 books in the $100-$150 range, 3 books in the $450-$700 range, and then there's the 28. As the increase in "Showcase fever" continues to spread throughout fandom, interest in DC's "other" tryout magazine won't be far behind.

Imagine with me for a moment, a conversation taking place in the dealers room of the San Diego Comic Book Convention in the year 2000. Two collectors have a discussion familiar to all of us at one time or another:

"Did you know that Brave & Bold #28 has gone up in the guide an average of 20% a year now for the last eight years. A 99/9 copy now guides for $11,200.. .Sheesh that's a gorgeous comic., and very important to comic history as well. I'd sure love to own one."

"Yea, me too. Ya know, it was amazingly cheap back in 1992! I can remember when it guided for the ridiculously low price of $2600. People must have been nuts to sell copies that cheap. I haven't seen a high grade copy for sale in years. I wish I could go back to '92 and find a copy before everybody caught on and the price went through the stratosphere...Oh well, wishful thinking...! ■

(Author's Note: Special thanks to all the collectors and dealers who responded to my request for data, especially on such short notice. Thanks also to Lotus 123.)

Issue Number	Feature	*1992 High Book Value	Rank by High Book Value
29	Justice League Of America	$2,500	1
28	Justice League Of America	$700	3
30	Justice League Of America	$700	3
34	Hawkman	$450	6
23	Viking Prince	$150	7
35	Hawkman	$150	7
36	Hawkman	$150	7
54	Teen Titans	$135	8
24	Viking Prince	$125	9
25	Suicide Squad	$100	11
43	Hawkman	$100	11
26	Suicide Squad	$80	18
27	Suicide Squad	$80	18
31	Cave Carson	$80	18
32	Cave Carson	$80	18
33	Cave Carson	$80	18
42	Hawkman	$80	18
44	Hawkman	$80	18
50	Green Arrow & J'onn J'onzz	$70	20
57	Metamorpho	$70	20
37	Suicide Squad	$60	25
38	Suicide Squad	$60	25
39	Suicide Squad	$60	25
40	Cave Carson	$60	25
41	[illegible]	$60	25
60	Teen Titans	$50	26
59	Batman & Green Lantern	$40	27
58	Metamorpho	$30	28
53	The Atom & The Flash	$22	29
51	Aquaman & Hawkman	$20	33
52	Sgt. Rock	$20	33
61	Starman & Black Canary	$20	33
62	Starman & Black Canary	$20	33
45	Strange Sports Stories	$15	38
46	Strange Sports Stories	$15	38
47	Strange Sports Stories	$15	38
48	Strange Sports Stories	$15	38
49	Strange Sports Stories	$15	38
55	Metal Men & The Atom	$12	40
56	Flash & Martain Manhunter	$12	40

The time line below is a useful quick reference for comparing the publication dates of Brave & Bold 1-62 with publication dates of Showcase 1-59. e.g. locate *B&B* #34 and you will notice that it was published one month after Showcase #30 and one month before Showcase #31.

	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Brave & Bold	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10		11		12		13		14	
Showcase								1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10		11
	1955				1956												1957											

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Brave & Bold	15		16		17		18		19		20		21		22		23		24		25		26	
Showcase		12		13		14		15		16		17		18		19		20		21		22		23
	1958												1959											

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Brave & Bold	27		28		29		30		31		32		33		34		35		36		37		38	
Showcase		24		25		26		27		28		29		30		31		32		33		34		35
	1960												1961											

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Brave & Bold	39		40		41		42		43		44		45		46		47		48		49		50	
Showcase		36		37		38		39		40		41		42		43		44		45		46		47
	1962												1963											

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Brave & Bold	51		52		53		54		55		56		57		58		59		60		61		62	
Showcase		48		49		50		51		52		53		54		55		56		57		58		59
	1964												1965											

Under the Ground Comics

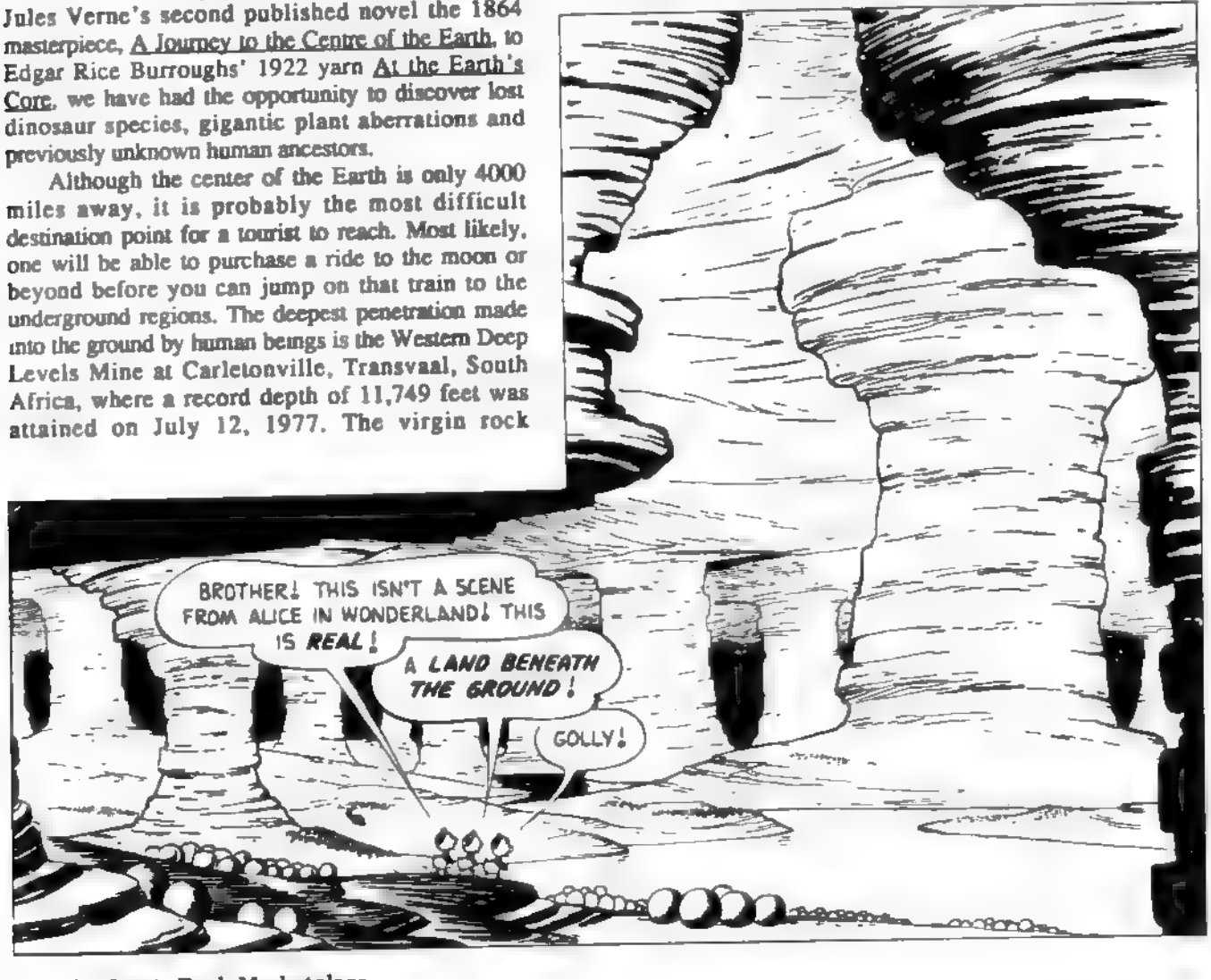
by Michael Naiman

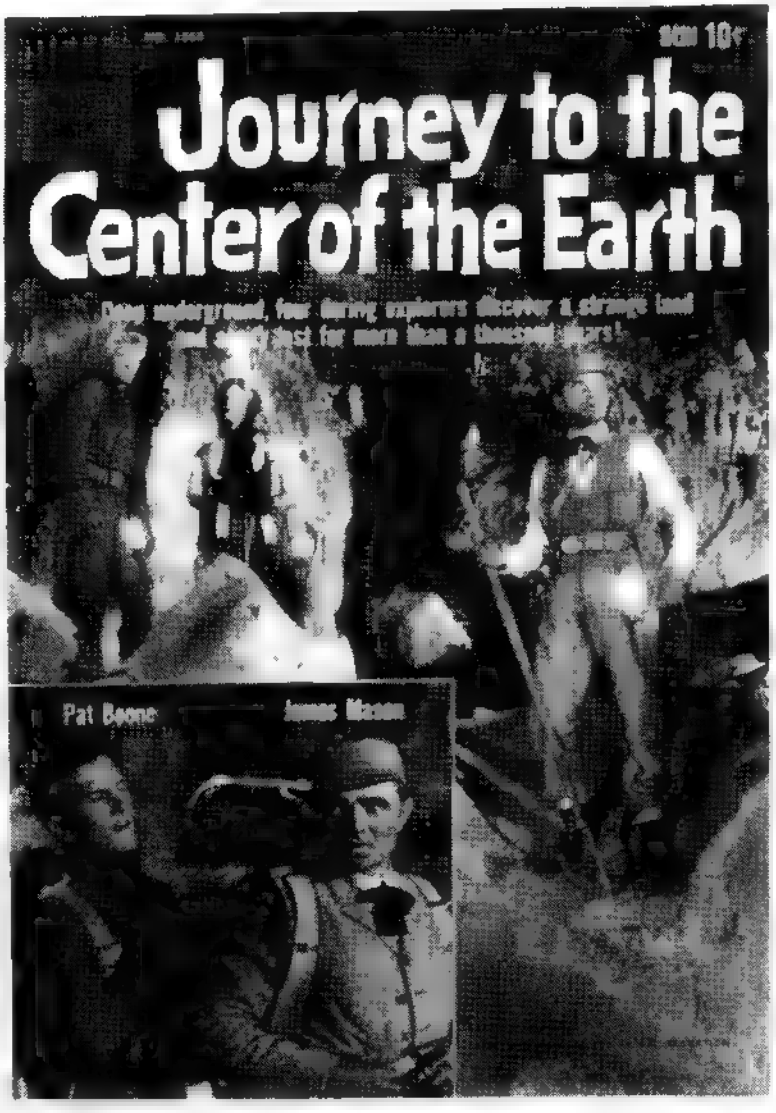
Bottom of page:
Huey, Dewey, and Louie discover "The Land Beneath The Ground" in *Uncle Scrooge* #13 (Mar 1956) ©Walt Disney

The concept of the hollow Earth is as old as the Greek myths that they spring from. Recurring tales of hidden worlds and lost civilizations serve us a rich plate for our literary appetites. From Jules Verne's second published novel the 1864 masterpiece, A Journey to the Centre of the Earth, to Edgar Rice Burroughs' 1922 yarn At the Earth's Core, we have had the opportunity to discover lost dinosaur species, gigantic plant aberrations and previously unknown human ancestors.

Although the center of the Earth is only 4000 miles away, it is probably the most difficult destination point for a tourist to reach. Most likely, one will be able to purchase a ride to the moon or beyond before you can jump on that train to the underground regions. The deepest penetration made into the ground by human beings is the Western Deep Levels Mine at Carletonville, Transvaal, South Africa, where a record depth of 11,749 feet was attained on July 12, 1977. The virgin rock temperature at that depth is 131 degrees Fahrenheit. Man's deepest penetration into the Earth's crust is a geological exploratory drilling near Zapolarny, Kola Peninsula, USSR, begun in 1970. By 1987, a depth of 8.07 miles (42,650 ft.) was surpassed. The temperature at 6.83 miles was recorded at 392 degrees Fahrenheit.

The world of comics has mined the vein of the lost world themes in many different eras. John Coleman Burroughs (son of ERB) handled the art in the Hawley Publication of *Hi Spot* #2 (really *Red Ryder* #2) in September of 1940. The classic cover illustrates "Dave Innes of Pellucidar", hero of the series, along with the Earth being skewered by the subterranean "earthship". The Pellucidar storyline was revived in the 70's, starting with DC's *Korak - Son of Tarzan* (Vol. #9 issue #46 May-Jun 1972) and continuing the story in *Weird Worlds* (Vol. 1 #1-#3, published bimonthly, Aug-Sep 1972 to Dec-Jan 1973 and, Vol. 2 #4-#7, published bimonthly, Feb-Mar 1973 until Sep-Oct 1973). The *Weird Worlds* issues benefited from such artists and inkers as Berni Wrightson, Neal Adams,





Four Color #1060 (Nov 1959) featuring the movie adaptaion of the 20th Century Fox film. ©20th Century Fox, ©Dell

Mike Kaluta, Alan Weiss, Carmine Infantino, Joe Orlando, Howard Chaykin and the mysterious "Crusty Bunker". According to Denny O'Neil, who handled the writing chores with Len Wein, "Crusty" was anyone who happened to show up at the office at the right time. Besides those previously mentioned, these contributors included Sal Amendola, Dick Giordano, Steve Mitchell and Allen Kupperberg. Sharing the *Weird Worlds* issues with " John Carter of Mars", the Pellucidar stories were featured on covers #2 (art by Orlando/Infantino and colored by Jack Adler), #4 (Orlando) and #6 (Mike Kaluta). The cover for issue #2 inexplicably combines elements of the John Carter rocket sled, manned by Carter, from his storyline with the battle scene of David Innes with a water serpent (taking place on dry land no less!).

The masterful illustration and panel set-ups in this run reflected the vast pool of talent that was utilized for this series. All of these issues are readily available in your local retailers back issue bins. Amazingly, this eight issue set can be obtained for under $20 in vf to nm condition.

The further adventures of David Innes and Pellucidar can be enjoyed via Burroughs' other hardback entries in this series. They include: 1) Pellucidar; 2) Land of Terror; 3) Back to the Stone Age; 4) Savage Pellucidar; 5) Tanar of Pellucidar and 6) Tarzan at the Earth's Core.

In 1976, American International undertook a British production of "At the Earth's Core", directed by Kevin Connor and starring renowned monster-man Peter Cushing as Abner Perry and a wise-cracking, non-heroic, Doug McClure cast as David Innes. Complete with a man-in-the-rubber-monster-costume, computer synthesized monkey voices, and a cast of dozens (and I do mean dozens), this film should be buried deep within the Earth's core for all time!

In May of 1957, Gilberton's *Classics Illustrated* #138, "A Journey to the Centre of the Earth", was true to the novel in the basic three man story of interaction and conflict. Not to be missed are the fabulous illustrations of reptilian conflict both inside and on the cover.

Two years after this issue was published, 20th Century produced it's Cinemascope movie version of "A Journey to the Centre of the Earth", some of which was shot in Carlsbad Caverns. The now classic film was directed by Henry Levin and starred James Mason as Professor Lindenbrook. The film also stars a terribly mis-cast Pat Boone as Alec McEwen. Other players included Peter Ronson as Hans, Arlene Dahl as Carla (the widow of murdered rival Dr. Goetaborg), Thayer David as Count Saknussemm (the villainous distant relative of the revered Arne Saknussemm, discoverer of the Earth's center), and lastly, Hans' erstwhile companion, Gertrude the Duck.

Pat Boone's presence must have inspired the movie moguls to include three songs in this 129 minute movie. Who can forget (even if you try) the poet Robert Burns "My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose" set to music by James Van Huesen, or those other toe tappers "Twice as Tall" and "The Faithful Heart", words and music by Sammy Cahn and James Van Huesen?

Further under-the-ground exploration will uncover a positive gem of the underground genre, authored and drawn by Carl Barks. *Uncle Scrooge* #13 (Mar 1956) featured "The Land Beneath the Ground", and concerns Uncle Scrooge's paranoia about earthquakes and their possible effect on the terra firma under the cherished Money Bin. An exploration into the depths under Duckburg by Donald, the nephews, and Uncle Scrooge, results in their encounter with the "Terries" and the "Fermies". What ensues can only be described as terrestrial turmoil of a hilarious nature!

The richest strike of this category occurs with the introduction of Cave Carson. **"Down, down, down they descend...to the land where earthquakes and volcanoes are born... Where there are no stars, sun or skies... Indeed, this is the world which no mortal ever dared dream... Where no mortal dare venture."** Thus began the introduction of "Cave Carson, Adventures Inside Earth".

This page –

Left: **The classic Silver Age cover of *Brave & Bold* #31 (Sep 1960) with the famous "Living Lava Creature".**

Right. ***Brave & Bold* #40 (Mar 1962) Art by Joe Kubert**

Both ©DC

Facing page –

Top row from left to right:

***Brave & Bold* #41 (May 1962)**

***Showcase* #48 (Feb 1964)**

***Brave & Bold* #33 (Jan 1961)**

Bottom row from left to right:

***Brave & Bold* #32 (Nov 1960)**

***Showcase* #49 (Apr 1964)**

***Showcase* #52 (Oct 1964)**

(Note that this issue is the only one with the sphere missing from the logo.)

BRAVE & BOLD
Cave Carson
INSIDE EARTH
SHOWCASE
The ALIEN ROBOTS from INNER SPACE!
The CITY 100 MILES DOWN!

The Cave Carson series starts off strong with "The Secret Beneath the Earth" by Bernard Bailey (*B&B* #31, Aug-Sep 1960) with its now classic and colorful cover, and "The City 100 Miles Down" (*B&B* #32, Oct-Nov 1960). Also included in #32 is a full page ad for the upcoming *Justice League of America* #1. Next was "Alien Robots from Inner Space" by Bruno Premiani (*B&B* #33, Dec 1960-Jan 1961). These three issues all deserve greater collector interest as does Cave Carson's adventures in *B&B* #40. This issue resumes the underground exploits utilizing the spectacular talents of Joe Kubert and tells the saga of "The Three Caverns of Doom" (Feb-Mar 1962). The inside front cover of issue #40 includes a "thank you" note from the publishers for tolerating the traumatic increase from the 10¢ cover price to the oppressively expensive 12¢ cover price. Mort Meskin adds his restrained artistic style with issue #41, "Raiders from the Secret World" (Apr-May 1962).

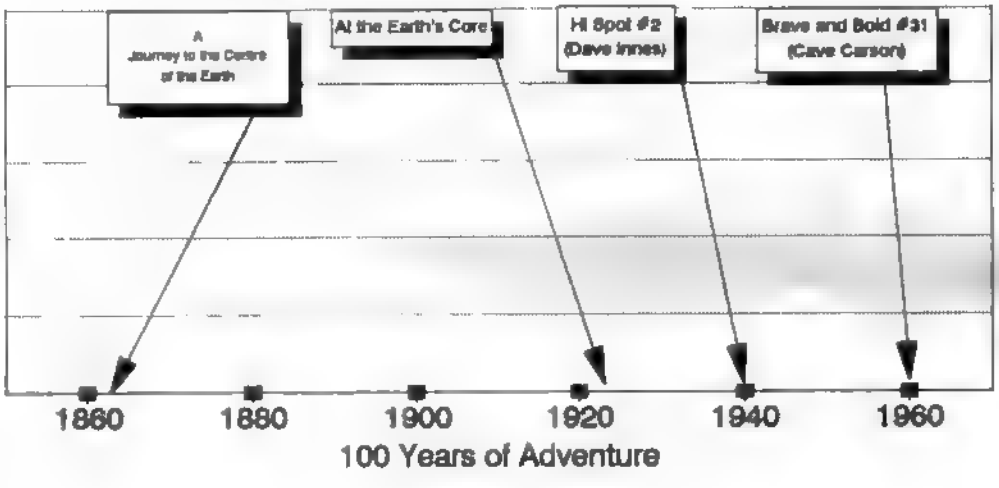
This fearless group of non-superhero spelunkers consisted of Cave Carson, king of the underground cave explorers, renowned female geologist Christie Madison, and Bulldozer Smith, former sandhog and ex-con. While character development, interaction, and conflict is minimized in this *Brave And Bold* series, scientific technology and gizmos abound. The all purpose vehicle, The Mighty Mole (patterned after the ERB model) is equipped with enough instrumentation to overcome any conceivable hardship. From its Thermo-ray, which burns through solid rock, to its submersible abilities, there is no weapon that has been overlooked, including the most useful Anti-Magnetic system imaginable. The storage locker contains asbestos suits, underwater scuba equipment, a large array of grenades and dynamite, and plenty of spare oxygen bottles. The Mighty Mole makes it's last appearance in *B&B* #41, after being prominently displayed on the covers of issues #31, #33, #40 and #41.

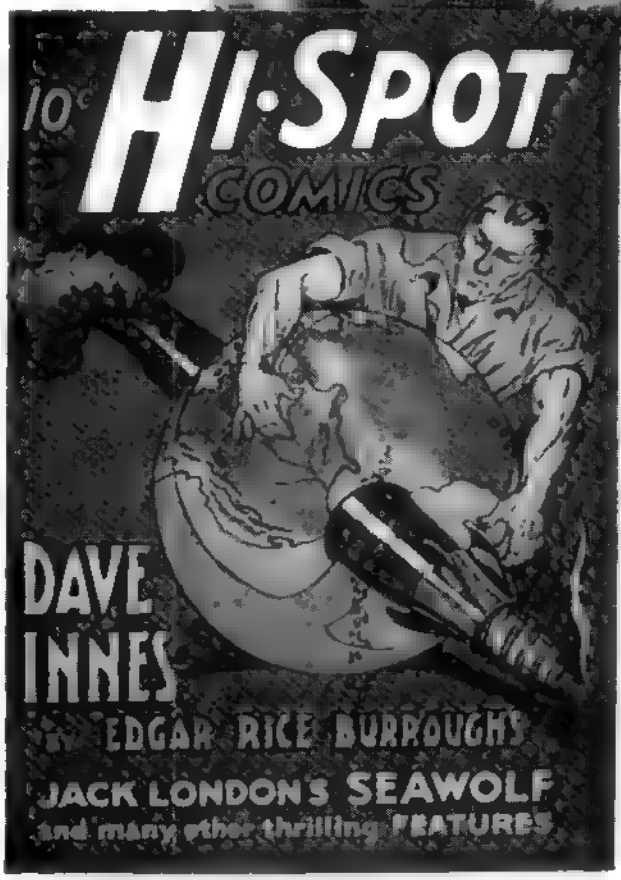
Nearly two years later, Cave Carson made his reappearance in the *Showcase* series under the able, yet restrained, style of Lee Elias (later famous for his work on Eclipso in *House Of Secrets*). The stories in the three *Showcase* issues differ significantly from the previous *Brave And Bold* entries. To add some intrigue and conflict to the group, a new character is introduced, the impetuous Johnny Blake. The beautiful girl geologist, Christie Madison, is torn between her love for Cave Carson and his devil-may-care rival, Johnny. The interpersonal friction that writer Bob Haney cultivates among the characters continues throughout the *Showcase* run.

Showcase # 48, "Killers of the Dead-End Maze" (Jan-Feb 1964), is noteworthy for two reasons. It has the introduction and first appearance of Lena the Lemur, primate mascot of the group, who continually shows her ability to help out during their adventures. Lena is fashionably outfitted with matching exploration equipment, miniaturized just for her. While in Paris during this issue, Christie has new, fancier, spelunking suits designed for the team. These "new look" outfits somehow improve their capabilities underground. Johnny's sudden absence causes emotional trauma for Christie who fears that the worse has happened.

Showcase #49, "Fury of the Fiery Avenger," (Mar-Apr 1964), finds the team in South America once again battling the curse of ancient legends. Cave is still concerned that he will never have a life together with Christie until the ghost of Johnny Blake is laid to rest. This issue is also note worthy in that it contains the only Cave Carson letters column.

Showcase #52, "Prisoners of the Lost World," (Sep-Oct 1964), utilizes the lost civilization theme with the discovery of Xanadu. Originally populated with surface people, the inhabitants want Cave to be their new leader. In-between the decision making process and trying to leave this paradise, the team fights a monstrous creature, spawned from the molten mineral lake and the brain of an evil interloper. Cave eventually decides to decline the offer to be the new ruler of Xanadu but promises not to reveal their secret civilization and indicates that he might return someday to their world where friendship and love has been harnessed as a powerful telepathic tool (sigh...). For all you trivia buffs out there, it should also be noted that the Cave Carson logo on *Showcase*





Top right:
***Classics Illustrated* #138**
(May 1957) ©Gilberton Co.

Top left:
Ace Science Fiction Classic F-156 "At The Earth's Core". Cover art by Roy Krenkel, Jr. ©ERB

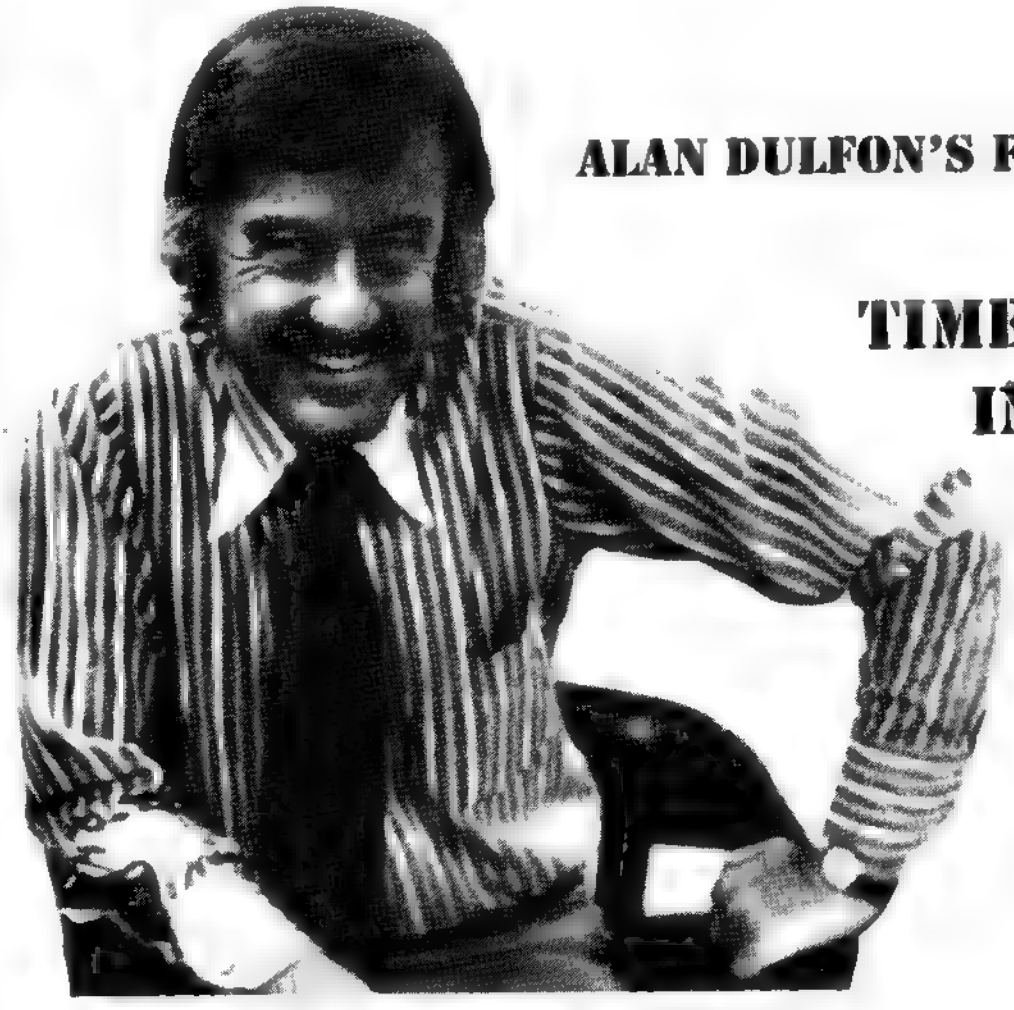
Below: ***Hi-Spot Comics* #2**
(Nov 1940) ©Newsy Pub.

#52 dropped the little cross-sectioned Earth symbol. Your guess at the reason for this change is as good as mine.

Since his final appearance in *Showcase* #52, Cave Carson has failed to resurface in any further adventures. The emergence of the superhero teams (Fantastic Four, Avengers and the JLA) put a damper on interest in the "unpowered" adventure groups (e.g. Sea Devils and Challengers Of The Unknown). Cave Carson may have also suffered from a lack of story theme variation. How many times can one write about aliens under the Earth, lost cities, and ancient legends coming back to haunt modern man? Not only that, but the eternal triangle theme in the *Showcase* stories might not have appealed much to the predominately male readership. If you want to ensure the rapid death of a series with pre pubescent male fans, spend a whole issue making costumes zippier and more fashionable. And, of course, the most likely coup de grace was the new emphasis on romance.

The availability of these early Silver Age titles in high grade is understandably difficult to unearth (groan...). Issue #32 appears to be the most difficult to obtain in any condition. However, if you just want to collect these eight "undiscovered" issues in fine or lower grade, the price is still *very* affordable and, for now at least, demand is still relatively low.

Pellucidar, the Terries and the Fermies, and Xanadu are all exotic names that occupy a niche somewhere in our minds or under our feet. Drifting on our planet's thin trembling mantle over that orb of molten inner Earth, we are fortunate to have that body of illustration and text that enables us to reserve a place inside our little spaceship Earth. These wonderful comic books keep alive the childhood love of lost civilizations, underground adventures, and discovery of the unknown. ■



ALAN DULFON'S FANDOM ZONE

PRESENTS A

TIME CAPSULE INTERVIEW

WITH A

COMIC BOOK LEGEND

SMILIN'

STAN LEE

20 YEARS AGO!

In the autumn of 1972, Alan Dulfon, then a sophomore at Brooklyn College, interviewed one of the most influential and innovative men the comic book industry has ever seen—Smilin' Stan Lee himself. In Alan's own words, the basic theme of the interview was: "Gee, Uncle Stan, where'd the Silver Age go?" What follows was excerpted from an article edited and published in two parts in the campus newspaper ***The Kingsman,*** *December 1972. Alan was accompanied by Warren Reece (who later joined the Marvel staff as their archivist and writer for Marvel Age, Crazy, and other titles) and Los Angeles journalist and screenwriter Joel Newman, who took the photographs. CBM is proud to present this amazing time capsule. If you are a Marvel fan, you will smile, as I did, at the poignant honesty of Stan Lee. If you are interested in Silver Age history, here's your chance to get it "from the horses mouth".*

Alan Dulfon: Stan, perhaps you could tell us a little bit about how you became the editor of Marvel (Timely) Comics at the age of seventeen.

Stan Lee: I had gotten out of high school and I was doing a lot of other things like writing, running around, and...I wanted to be an actor actually, but I won some essay contest in school and the teacher said I ought to try to be a writer, and I got a job. I heard that there was an opening here for an editor. Joe Simon and Jack Kirby were here at the time and they needed an assistant. It had to do with writing a little copy, and getting their lunches, and sweeping up the place, and just—you know, generally make yourself useful around the office. So I came up, and I think my salary was twelve bucks a week, which seemed to me to be a lot in those days. And they gave me captions to write, and if

there was a story they weren't happy with, they'd ask me to fix it up, and I'd fix it, and I'd run down and get their lunches, and stuff like that. And then after I'd been there a while, they both left, and I was the only guy left in the office, and the publisher said, "Hey, do you think you could handle the books until I hire somebody else?"—and I've been here ever since.

Warren Reece: You wrote, Stan, but you didn't really draw anything that's been published, did you?

SL: No. I draw, but not even as well as you guys. I do layouts, and I could do cartoons when I was in the army. I did a lot of instruction manuals; I illustrated them myself. And I think I *could* draw comics if I studied for a year or two, but I don't have the time. But I never drew a strip. I used to sit and sketch, and say, "Hey, why don't you do the panel this way?"; but if I had to sit down and actually draw the strip I don't think I'd be much good at it.

AD: Why did you stop writing?

SL: I stopped writing because I just ran out of time. I've become the publisher of Marvel.

AD: What happened to Marty Goodman?

SL: Well, he's no longer the publisher of Marvel; you see, Marvel used to be a company called Magazine Management Company, and Marvel was part of Magazine Management, but now they've separated and Marvel is going to be an independent company by itself, so merry Marty Goodman is still the publisher of Magazine Management and I'm the publisher of Marvel. You know, it's a funny thing—they say that every comedian eventually wants to play Hamlet; well I, as a writer, have always wanted to be a businessman, so I'm really enjoying it because I've always wanted to be able to decide what books we should publish, and be able to say, "Let's add more of these and get rid of these," and I can do that now so it's really great.

AD: You made that type of decision when you replaced the Human Torch with Nick Fury in *Strange Tales* #135. Was the reason for this because of the trend towards James Bond-type material at the time?

SL: Well, we picked Nick Fury because there was a trend at the time, but the reason we dropped the Human Torch was we felt he just wasn't as good by himself as he had been in the Fantastic Four. And I wasn't really all that happy with the stories....And rather than do something that I thought wasn't as good as it should be, I thought we'd try something altogether new. I wouldn't mind doing a Human Torch strip in a 20-page story where we'd really have the room to expand it and make it a good story, but I felt in a ten-pager with the Thing....

AD: I guess that's why later all the Marvel "double feature" mags were split up—not just *Strange Tales* with Doctor Strange and Nick Fury, but *Tales to Astonish* with Sub-mariner and Hulk, and *Tales of Suspense* with Iron Man and Captain America—and each hero was given his own book...?

SL: We were just doing them both in one book because the artists didn't have enough time to do twenty-page stories, so they'd each do a ten-page story and we'd put two in one book. Then, as we got and more artists....I like a twenty-page story myself. You get more to read, and you can develop it more. I find it's very hard to tell a good story in less pages. The more pages you have, the better chance of a good characterization and character development and all of that.

AD: And why was *Amazing Fantasy* discontinued? That was a very fine book.

SL: *Amazing Fantasy* wasn't selling all that well. The older readers loved it, but it wasn't selling to enough younger kids, and we decided to drop it. And before dropping it, just for fun, we thought we'd put out Spider-Man, as you know. So we put Spider-Man into the last issue just to get it out of my system, and...gee, the thing just took off.

AD: That's for sure. But before that happened, there was a period in the fifties when Marvel superheroes apparently died out, and there were none at all on the stands up until *Fantastic Four* #1 in 1961. What was the cause of that?

SL: The comic book field has always had trends. There was a time when westerns were big, there was a time when cartoon books like Mickey Mouse were very big; we had a lot of those here. *Terrytoons*, Silly Seal and Ziggy Pig, Postie the Pelican....

AD: I saw Gandy Goose in *Marvel Mystery Comics!*

SL: (*laughs*) Yeah. There were times when we had a lot of horror books, we had a lot of romance and a lot of war books (during the Korean war), and before that we had *Battle Brady*, *Combat Kelly*, *Combat Casey*, *Battlefront*, *War Adventures*, and on and on. And then the war field died down—all trends. When we brought out the Fantastic Four, we said "from now on we're not going to follow the trends, we're going to make our own trends".

AD: Ahh, yes: I believe you were the first one to have a comic strip in which a superhero—the Thing—said, "I don't want to wear a costume," and the heroes argued among themselves, had financial problems....They were more human and less glamorous like the heroes of other publishers. What influenced you to create that new type of mystery man with hang-ups?

SL: You know what did it? Sheer boredom. I was so bored doing the same old stuff over and over again for twenty years that finally I figured dammit, I'm going to do the kind of book I'd like to read if I read comics, you know?

AD: Wasn't that sort of a risk?

SL: Yeah. But we weren't doing much at Marvel, I wasn't risking much. The books weren't selling all that well anyway.

WR: Those weird books were terrific, though.

SL: But this was different—now we were going back into superheroes, and I figured, well, let's do it a different way. And it really caught on, people just loved it. And the whole theory was—what would I do if I had a super power? That was the whole thing: what would happen if a real person had a super power. He still might get an allergy attack while he's fighting a crook, or have acne, or he wouldn't always make it with girls...so that made it fun, playing around with Spider-Man....

WR: Didn't Bill Everett also kind of have, at least in personality, the very human type of superhero in Sub-mariner back in the forties?

SL: Yes, you're absolutely right. Sub-mariner was very close to this. He didn't always behave like the typical "good guy," and he would get angry, and...he was a great character. Still is.

AD: You've brought back the Sub-mariner, as well as Captain America, the Human Torch, and the Vision from the forties and fifties; do you plan to revive any other Golden Age heroes?

SL: None that I can think of, unless some of the writers dream some others up that I had forgotten about.

AD: Well...you have many books out now like *Monsters on the Prowl*, *Creatures on the Loose*, *Crypt of Shadows*....Why didn't you ever try a new, updated book about, let's say...the Young Allies, instead of so many monster titles?

SL: It's a funny thing—you can never guess everything you think the readers want, and right now there seems to be such a demand for these monster books. And besides, I hate sidekicks....

AD: But the Young Allies weren't acting in the capacity of sidekicks, they were....

SL: ...That's true, they were all together. Well, maybe we *should* have a team like that! Wait, let me write that down....(*writes in a notepad*) All right—if you don't ask for a royalty, I'll consider this....(*laughter*)

AD: But seriously...what brought about this sudden interest in monsters? Now you've also got a Dracula book, a Frankenstein book, *Werewolf by Night*, *Fear*, *Supernatural Thrillers*...!

SL: I don't know what brings these things about, but you have to stay tuned to public tastes. You see what movies are selling, what TV shows are popular, and...maybe it's the younger readers. I don't know...but there seems to be a demand for it at the moment, because the books are selling.

AD: I see. Also, I couldn't help noticing among the current titles that all of the *X-Men* issues are reprints now, and have been for quite some time. What's *that* all about?

SL: Ah, it's a funny thing. I find that you take a book sometimes that was moderately popular, and you drop it all of a sudden, and a year later or two years later people start writing letters about it and talking about it as if it had been a great classic. It's like...if a book hasn't been published for a while, people begin to love it, and they dramatize it, and they start saying, "Boy, that was great in the old Golden Age of Comics!" and, "That's when they really knew how to do comics!" and, "Why don't you bring it back again!" And all of a sudden the X-Men, which wasn't one of our top strips—it was a good strip, but it wasn't one of the best—everywhere I go, at every college I lecture, people are saying, "Bring back the X-Men! Bring back the X-Men!" So I thought, well, just for fun I'll see if they really want it, and I figured we'll start again with the origins because we don't have enough time or enough artists to draw a new one—so maybe we'll reprint it and see what happens. Would you believe that the reprints now are selling as well or better than the original stuff did a few years ago? Now eventually we'll run out of reprints, and when we do, by then I hope we're going to be able to find an artist and writer to do it and we'll just continue it with new stuff.

AD: Will "Marvelites" ever again see another annual on the stands?

SL: No, I don't think so, but what I'm hoping to do is publish some bigger books like maybe for a dollar or something when we get the time. And some special editions—either hard cover or soft cover, I don't know yet—but I have a lot of plans to do a lot of new things with Marvel, but since we've increased our production to 42 books a month, we're just so busy turning out the regular stuff that we haven't the time to go into it, but you'll be seeing a lot of new stuff in the next few months. We're going to put out 75-cent books the size of *Creepy* and *Eerie*.

AD: Do you have any plans for Marvel superheroes to appear on television or records, or maybe a movie here and there?

SL: We have an album that just came out called *Spider-Man: A Rockomic*. Buddha Records put it out and there are a number of people talking with us now about movies, so I hope that within the next couple of years there'll be something. And we have a fellow named Steve Lemberg who's trying to put a lot of our things on television and in the movies, and he's the fellow who did the record album, so I think you'll see some action in that direction within the next few months.

AD: I know every card-carrying MMMS member is curious as to why Jack Kirby left Marvel. Could we

get some information about that?

SL: I don't know. I think Jack had another offer from National and I think he may have felt a little bit locked in here. He wanted to do his own thing, and while he was here I was writing the stories, and I was the editor. I never put a guy down for wanting to do something on his own, so...well, he wanted to leave. I was sorry as hell to see him go and I'd love to get him back, and I still hope he'll come back someday because I think he was great. But he went over there and it's for the public to judge whether his stuff is now better or worse. I think Jack would like to come back, but he has a contract, and he can't do anything until the contract is over....he has another couple of years to go. But I wouldn't be surprised if he's back here in another two years.

AD: If and when Jack Kirby returns, would he be writing his own books here?

SL: I don't know, I don't think so. I think if he comes back I'd like someone else to write the stories the way we always did. I'd like Jack to plot them—he's great at plotting them, breaking them down—but I'd like someone else to put in the dialogue and so forth. We can't have people doing their own thing because in the Marvel world, everything meshes with everything else, so it all has to tie in. I would never put out any books that just had no relation at all to the other books. I don't think it would work with Marvel. Unless it was something like Conan, where he lives in another age and can't really relate to our characters. That would be different.

AD: *New Gods, Forever People*—would he be doing that type of book at Marvel?

SL: Oh, I can't even plan that far ahead. He may not come back. You know it's been two years; the whole world could have changed in two years. But I'm not worried, because if he should come back, fifteen minutes after he's back here we'll know just what he's going to do. It won't take long to work something out.

AD: And Steve Ditko?

SL: As far as Ditko, I don't know...he was a funny kind of guy. I'd love to have him back too. He was great, but...I don't think he likes us anymore, I don't know why. He just walked out one day and we don't hear from him. I don't know what he's doing....I think he's over at Charlton doing something.

AD: A book called *Haunted*.

SL: Yeah. But I never quite understood Steve Ditko. And I miss him too; I think he was a good man. Boy he had a lot of talent. But—funny guy—I think he felt our books were too commercial, or maybe he felt I wasn't a good editor and he didn't want me to tell him what to do....I don't even know! I really don't know exactly what bugged him, but he took off and seems to have no desire at all to come back.

AD: Hmm. Speaking of books about those who are 'haunted'—in your *Ghost Rider* book, you portray Satan as being...rather easily accessible to his followers, and...in light of certain contemporary social phenomena which factually relates to that type of interest, could that be a potential problem?

SL: Well you see, to us, everything we do is mythology, and we figure as writers and artists we have the right to depict anything in the world any way we want to, and anybody else has the right to say we're wrong or to do their own version of it. We never claimed these are true stories; they're comic books, they're all myths. Spider-Man is a myth, Conan is a myth, Thor is a myth....

WR: Some of those seemed like awfully real myths, though.

SL: That's 'cause we do 'em well.

AD: But pulling a character out of the Bible...isn't that like doing a comic book like...I don't know, "The Adventures of God" or something like that?

SL: We don't think of Satan as a god. But now that you mention it, that's not another bad idea—"The Adventures of God"—gotta get that down. (*Laughter as he writes in his notepad again.*) Keep talking; you'll give me ideas for a whole new line of comics!

WR: What does somebody do to get on your staff?

SL: If you want to write, you contact Roy Thomas. If you want to draw, you contact John Romita, who's becoming our art director.

AD: You mentioned Conan a couple of times. What inspired you to begin that and King Kull?

SL: There seems to be a feeling for Sword and Sorcery now also. If we find that people want something, we try to give it to them. We realized that Conan pocket books were selling well, so we figured okay, we'll bring out a Conan comic book and see what happens.

AD: This applies to Doc Savage too?

SL: Yeah! We figured why not do Doc Savage; there were a lot of people who were buying the Doc Savage pocket books.

WR: A lot of people, though, also felt that the Doc Savage comics sort of marred the Marvel standard of originality that they were very much into.

SL: We try to do both things. For example, for years I've wanted to get Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* and do a comic of that. That wouldn't be original either, but I'd love to do it. Now if we *only* did that, then I think they'd be justified in saying it's marring our originality image, but we also do a lot of original stuff. See, I like to do everything—I'd like to do stuff that's original, stuff that's based on movies or classics, stuff about Satan, stuff about God, stuff about good guys, bad guys—it's fun. If you're in a creative field, it's fun just doing

everything, and I try not to follow rules like, "Oh well, we better not do this because we won't look original," or, "We better not do that because it'll bother some people...."

WR: But you handled all of those problems so well until about three years ago, and if you weren't thinking about it, then you did an awfully good job of doing something that you didn't think about.
AD: Definitely. But it's true that right now, many fans *do* feel that there's been a sort of sickening in the quality of what's being offered by *all* publishers in the entire comics field in general....

SL: Aw, I don't like to hear you say that....

AD: Not just at Marvel, but all publishers. In fact, maybe this has occurred at Marvel least of all; but still, objectively speaking, there *is* a difference between what's on the stands now and the earlier issues of any publication. To what would you possibly attribute this?

SL: I can't answer a question if I don't agree with the premise. I don't think comics have gone down in quality at all in the past three years. I think in many cases they're better than ever. What happens is—you've probably been into comics for quite a few years, right?

AD: Yes, I have.

SL: When you're into something for a long time, it can't have the same excitement for you after a few years. For instance, people who loved the Beatles when they first started, after the first few years were looking around for another group, and then they found the Rolling Stones or the Jefferson Airplane. You know, it's almost a subconscious thing where you feel it isn't clever to like something that's way up on top; so you look for something new, because the thing that has been good, and month after month and day after day it's up there—even though it stays just as good, you've gotten used to it. And it's the nature of the human condition: you want something new, you want something different. Every time I lecture at a college, the one thing the students always ask me is, "What are the new things you're coming out with?" And I say to them, "Why, don't you like the stuff we have?" "We love it! But what's the *new* stuff?" And I've been learning—this is what everybody is interested in. You can't rest on your laurels. You can't do just one thing and keep turning it out. If you were reading Kurt Vonnegut and you had to study his books over and over again, you'd begin to think that with each book he does he's losing his touch or something. But if he came out in some new direction with something new, then you'd be all excited again. And I think that's what has happened. Our books are no worse now, but for example, whatever we do with Spider-Man, you saw that type of thing three years ago. So we'd have to kill off Aunt May or have Spidey become a homosexual....

AD: Now *that* would sell! (*laughter*)

SL: We'd have to do something totally unexpected.
AD: Would you ever consider pushing out the boundaries of the Comics Code and doing something like that?

SL: Frankly, I haven't thought about it, but possibly in the future it could happen.

WR: Make a note of that.

SL: Yep, yep, yep...(*writes on pad and laughs*) This'll give me something to think about.

Wanted By Collector
Atlas Comics
in FINE or better
Young Men #24-28
Men's Adventures #21-28
Human Torch #35-38
Captain America #70-78

plus Misc. Issues of:

Amazing Detective
Amazing Mysteries
Journey Into Mystery
Strange Tales
Tales Of Suspense
Tales To Astonish
Uncanny Tales
World Of Fantasy
Strange Worlds
Amazing Adventures
Amazing Adult Fantasy

Also Wanted:
any high grade
(VF or Better)
1950s Atlas Fantasy Titles
CONTACT
Bob Casali
2575 "C" Street
San Diego, CA 92102
(619) 338-9922

Classics Illustrated

and the Mysterious "HRN"

by Dan Malan

The *Classics Illustrated* series was and is unique in many ways. They were marketed as books to adults, but as comics to kids. Each issue was complete in itself and could be reprinted dozens of times, and still be current. They were reprinted in 30 countries, and each country could add new titles or covers as they felt inclined. The full worldwide outreach of the official Classics series involved over 600 different literary works adapted into comic-book format.

There is a growing number of enthusiastic Classics Illustrated (CI) collectors around the world. But, besides diehard Classics collectors, many other people have an interest in some particular CI titles or artists. A recent book on the History of Horror Comics pointed out that *Classic Comics* #13 (Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde) was the very first horror comic. Since the scope of literature covered in CI is so broad, and since over a hundred different artists worked on the CI series, there is something there to appeal to almost everyone.

One of the biggest drawbacks to the series is the complexity of editions. Many titles had over 20 reprint editions. Many comic collectors find it a pain in the neck trying to tell all the editions apart. Differences between editions could be very minute, or they could involve completely new artwork, inside and out. Two editions of the same title could be worth between $2 and $2000. So if you have even the slightest interest in the *Classics Illustrated* series, it is worth your while to learn the basics of how to differentiate CI editions.

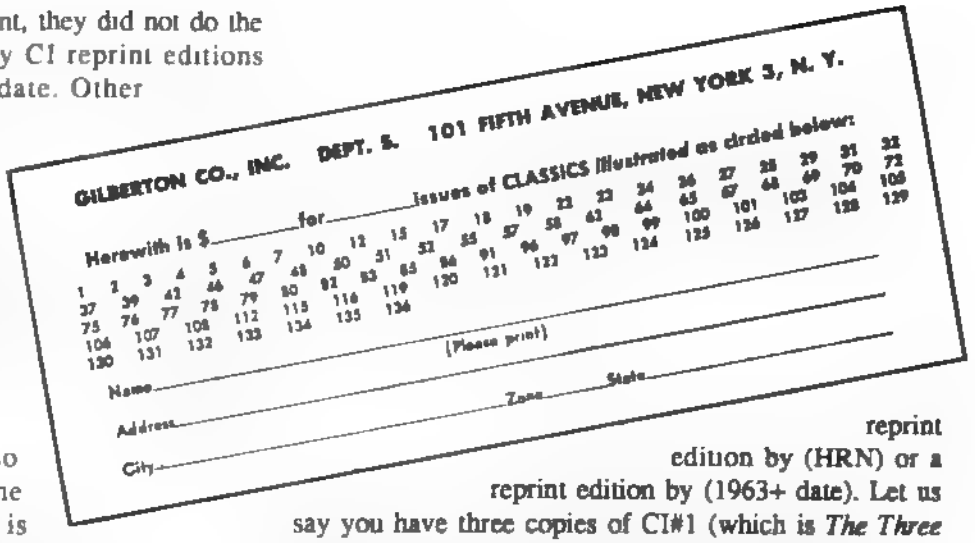
There are two simple "rules" or guidelines to understanding CI editions. One is the "coming-next-ad" and the other is the "HRN." If you can master these two CI features, you can pretend to be a Classics expert, just like I do. The "coming-next-ad" ad is very simple. You just look on the inside front cover (in some early titles it might be on the inside or outside back cover) for an illustrated ad for the CI title coming next. Such an ad is the primary means of determining the all-important "original" or first edition of that title, which is usually much more valuable than any of the reprint editions.

But the most important principle to identify all CI editions is the HRN. The initials HRN stand for "Highest Reorder Number." But what does that mean? Keep in mind that *Classics Illustrated* was the only series which actively encouraged the collecting of the entire series. Almost every edition had a nearly complete list of all the titles in the series. It is usually on the outside back cover, but could occasionally be found on the inside front or back cover. The HRN is literally the highest number on the reorder list. It simply tells how many CI titles had been issued by the time that particular copy was printed.

Now you may still be wondering why we do not just list the date of each edition. That is a tale of woe. Alas, while the CI

Classics Illustrated may have been easily comprehensible, but their numbering system was anything but

publisher kept the HRN list current, they did not do the same for the date. Alack, many CI reprint editions continued to list the original date. Other editions listed completely incorrect dates, while some listed no date at all. Many a comic collector has been led astray thereby. If you collect a regular series of old comics, you simply have one dated edition of each number. All that goes out the window with CI titles.


GILBERTON CO., INC. DEPT. S. 101 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 3, N. Y.

Herewith is $_____ for _____ Issues of CLASSICS Illustrated as circled below:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 10 12 15 17 18 19 22 23 34 36 37 38 39 51 52
37 39 42 44 47 48 50 51 52 55 57 58 63 64 65 67 68 69 70 72
75 76 77 78 79 80 82 83 85 86 91 96 97 98 99 100 101 103 104 106
106 107 108 112 113 116 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129
130 131 132 133 134 135 136

(Please print)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zone _____ State _____

That is why the HRN is so important. It becomes the "date" equivalent. So that is how we keep track of reprint editions. It also acts as a double-check on first editions. Any first edition should have an HRN very close to that of CI title number. Finally in 1963, after they had stopped issuing new CI titles, they began listing correct reprint dates, since the HRN had stopped at 167. So all CI editions can be placed into three categories: A. The first edition with the coming-next-ad. B. Reprints prior to 1963 listed by HRN. C. Reprints from 1963 on, listed by date.

If you want to list CI editions, you would list the title number; then in parentheses either a first edition - (0) or a reprint edition by (HRN) or a reprint edition by (1963+ date). Let us say you have three copies of CI#1 (which is *The Three Musketeers*), one from each category. You do not need to list the title name. You would just list, for example, - 1(0), 1(64), 1(11/67). That tells other Classics collectors exactly what editions you have. I have seen people with CI collections compile an enormous list of information, not knowing that one simple designation is all that they need: (0) or (HRN) or (1963+).

THE WORLD'S GREATEST ADVENTURE STORIES ARE FAITHFULLY AND EXCITINGLY PRESENTED IN THE VERY POPULAR AND INIMITABLE
CLASSICS Illustrated
THEY'RE Only 10¢ Each*
(15¢ in Canada & Foreign)
*SEND JUST 10¢ EXTRA WITH YOUR ORDER TO COVER HANDLING CHARGE
Each issue a complete adaptation of an immortal gem of literature by the world's greatest authors. Each page chock full of exciting—thrilling—chilling adventure. Each one of these treasure chests of reading delight contains over 300 color illustrations.
More than 25,000 schools throughout the world use them too!
MAKE YOUR SELECTION FROM THESE 52 TITLES
They're only 10¢ each (15¢ in Canada and Foreign)
GILBERTON COMPANY, INC. • 836 BROADWAY • NEW YORK 3, N. Y.

We do need to mention a couple of exceptions to the coming-next-ad rule. Two reprint editions - 55(75) and 57(75) do have coming-next ads (printing error). They do not count as (0)s because 55(0) and 57(0) have HRNs of (57). With CI on a monthly schedule, it is obvious that 55(75) and 57(75) were issued nearly two years after 55(0) and 57(0). Also, the last two titles – 168(0) and 169(0), do not have coming-next-ads. CI#168 was never reprinted. But CI#169 is rather bizarre. There is one reprint with the same date (Spring 1969) but a different HRN. So 169(166) = 169(0), and 169(169) is the reprint.

While these general principles should explain most CI details, the series still has quite a few intricacies. We recommend two excellent sources for the definitive information on the U.S. CI series: *The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* and *The Complete Guide to Classics Collectibles*. But now that you have mastered the secret of the HRN, just think how you can use that knowledge to impress your friends at parties... ■

Dan Malan is the Editor/Publisher of The Classics Collector magazine, with subscribers in over 20 countries. He recently authored the first volume of the book series, The Complete Guide to Classics Collectibles. Each volume will contain nearly a thousand full-color photos. If you would like more information, you can write to Dan c/o CBM

Lee's Soapbox

Happy Sales To You!

20 Irreverent "Guidelines" for the Comic Shop Owner

satire by Lee Hester

▲ Right Look

Wrong Look ▼

Many spend years trying to look and sound like a real comic shop owner. By following these simple guidelines, you too can master this elite profession in a few short weeks!

1. **Location.** It's everything. Make sure to get a tiny store in the worst part of town as far away from main streets as possible.

2. **Promotion.** Don't waste your money on advertising, especially the Yellow Pages. All collectors worth their salt should know about you already!

3. **Fixtures.** Comics retailing requires specialized racks, such as the type you find for free in the back of alleys. Never purchase new fixtures.

4. **Lighting.** Dim lighting is your friend; it keeps your customers from seeing what your store *really* looks like and reduces the chances that they will be able to actually see the comics they are buying.

5. **Cleanliness.** Never vacuum, clean the windows, etc. Cleanliness attracts the unsavory element (normal, mundane type, people with money to spend).

6. **Hours.** Your store hours should be set up to be convenient to you. They should also be very flexible. That way you can open when you like, close early if you want, take the day off if you want. And the good news is that you don't have to let anyone know ahead of time about changes in store hours. Oh, and never post any hours on the door either. Why wreck a good thing.

7. **Displays**. The best way to market comics is by putting them in huge, towering heaps that are in constant danger of toppling over. People will think you have every comic ever made. Don't tell them that the bottom 2/3rds of each stack is made up entirely of duplicates of recently over-ordered comics.

8. **Music.** Make sure to blast your favorite punk or heavy metal band at maximum volume. Let people know that you are a super party animal. This also reduces loitering.

9. **Staffing.** Always pay employees less than minimum wage or better yet, make them take their salary in new comics. Never discuss the discounts you've set up with each particular customer. That way when you are not there, they will be able to say "I don't know anything about it, you'll have to wait till the owner gets back".

10. **Vulgar Colloquialisms.** Make sure to pepper your conversation with as many obscenities as possible. Make your motto "I like to offend everyone equally".

11. **Smoking.** Comic dealers can cultivate that sophisticated "man about town" demeanor by chain smoking. Choose camels; they're very popular with the kids these days since their symbol is a comic like character. Also Camels are a real favorite among insurance agents when they determine how much the store fire insurance will be.

12. **Stock.** Only carry items that you personally like. If you love Marvels and don't care for DC comics, demonstrate your brand loyalty by NOT stocking DC comics. To thine own self be true.

13. **Ordering New Issues.** Care must be taken to order properly. Wait till the last minute. Order any amount you come up with off the top of your head. If you have leftovers, see #7 above.

14. **Speculation.** Do it! Order several extra cases of all "HOT" titles. But remember to put only one copy of each out for sale. We don't want customers to get the wrong idea.

15. **Check and Credit Card Policy.** In God we trust. All others pay cash.

16. **Buying.** Never pay more than a dime per book. Very few people will sell to you, but when they do, you'll get that all important reputation as a big time dealer!

17. **Pricing.** Always use the mint price! This pretty much eliminates the bother of grading (grading is such a waste of time). And be sure to check all the price guides available, and use the one with the highest price. People like to see high prices. It demonstrates to them that their collection of 1990s comics must be worth a fortune.

18. **Attire and Appearance.** Let the world know you are a real comic shop owner with that distinctive look that is the all important hall mark of a genuine shop owner. Try to achieve that disheveled, unshaven, and minimum hygiene look, by wearing a stained superhero T-shirt with your stomach hanging out. If your stomach doesn't hang out, practice!

19. **Female Customers.** If by some miracle, a female wanders into your shop, beware! History has shown us that comic shops have become the new "men's only" clubs. If you cater to female customers you may be risking your entire male clientele. After all, would your male clientele be there in the first place if they got along with women all that well? Don't shirk your responsibility. Make lewd remarks about her to your (male) customers when she leaves or better yet, whistle at her and keep her away.

20. **Restrooms.** Last, but definitely not least, never, never, ever clean your restroom. Do not provide paper towels or, more importantly, toilet paper. And be sure to decorate it with photos torn out of girlie magazines. This ensures the perfect look required for correct comic shop ambiance.

If you follow these simple rules you can cut years off your special training. Good luck and happy sales to you! ■

Lee Hester is the owner of Lee's Comics with locations in Palo Alto and San Mateo, California. He has, at one time or another, done nearly everything in this article.

Scarcity of Golden Age DCs:

An Objective Data set

More Fun 52-107

More Fun Comics #56 (Jun 1940) ©DC
Chosen by the experts as the rarest. Dr Kachinski's data suggests otherwise.

by Dr. Patrick M. Kochanek

The results of the data collected on the number of copies of each issue of *More Fun Comics* (issues #52-107) offered for sale to the general public during the past 6 years was somewhat similar to that presented for *Flash* and *Adventure Comics* (see the previous articles in this series, CBM #11-13). No single era dominated in terms of scarcity; rather, individual issues within a given year were both common and scarce.

Opinion of expert collectors/dealers

Gary Carter	#101 Scarcest #s 56,58,61,67 Scarce
Stephen Fishler	# 96 Scarcest #s 87,90,97,100 Scarce
Ernie Gerber ***	#s 56,98 Rated equally Scarcest
Tom Nicholson	# 61 Scarcest #s 55,56,65,73 Scarce
John Verzyl	#s 56,72,76 Scarcest

***As ranked in Photo Journal Guide

Comment:

There are some particularly interesting observations concerning scarcity in the *More Fun* run. First, #98 was scarcest with #s 95 and 64 running a close second. Of note, Ernie Gerber correctly rated #98 as the scarcest issue. Several of the of the pre-Superboy issues in 1944 (95,97,98) are scarce probably because it appeared from distributor data that *More Fun* was being phased out. The marginal content, relatively boring Green Arrow covers, and unexciting title almost certainly made this a poor seller in the superhero market. They would really be quite tough to find if it weren't for the fact that taste in superhero books has not changed very much since the mid 1940s, and demand for them is still relatively weak.

Second, four of the five experts rated *More Fun* #56 as scarce, the only consistently mentioned book. Again, #56 is scarce in ultra-high grade (what the dealers and long time collectors generally collect). Other than the Mile High copy (pictured in color on page #12 in the "Pedigree Comic" article in the 1991 Sotheby's Auction Catalog), neither Tom Nicholson nor I (both long-standing *More Fun* collectors) have ever seen another white paged, pedigree quality copy for sale. For example, the Larson collection copy has white pages, but, is a VG with coupon out. This is the first Dr. Fate cover, and is fantastic classic one at that, driving demand up. To compound problems for the high grade collector, it is from early 1940 and has a precarious white cover. None of the 12 copies offered was high grade.

Third, and most interesting is the fact that unlike any of the other titles surveyed in this series, several of the key issues in *More Fun* were actually in the scarcest 15% of the run (notably #s 67 and 73). For the other titles, this was almost uniformly not the case (i.e., *Flash* #s 1, 104; GL #1, *Adventure* #s 40,48,61,72,73). This suggests that these *More Fun* key issues are indeed scarce, since keys were very likely over-represented in the data set (see article #1 in this series). Of note, unlike #s 67 and 73, *More Fun* #52 and 53 were not in the scarcest 25%.

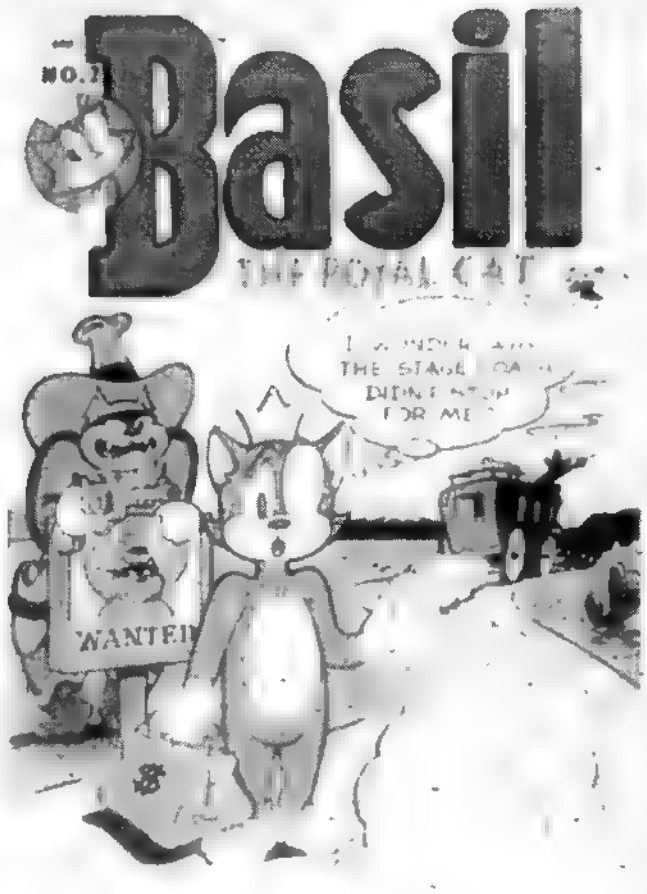
Fourth, there are three points in the data set where an issue or a few issues are quite common, #59, #s 82-87, 101 and 105. *More Fun* #59 is very commonly seen at conventions and in dealer lists. For some unknown reason, it must have had a very large print run, has a relatively high price tag for a non-key book, and has an average cover compared to less expensive issues like #s 60,61,64, and 65 (high supply, low demand). The print runs on 82-87 may have been large since #s 84 and 87 are WWII covers, and 86 is the first Johnny Quick cover. The first Superboy and the first solo cover appearance of Superboy also may have had larger print runs.

Finally, the data set suggests that *More Funs* are (in general) somewhat more scarce than the other DC titles surveyed in this series. Twenty-eight of the fifty-six issues were offered for sale less than 10 times. Indeed, comparing the four titles more formally, there were 9.6 copies per issue of *More Fun* on average offered for sale compared to 12.7 for *Adventure*, 10.7 for *Flash*, and 12.2 for *Green Lantern*. These data, I feel, support the general notion of long-standing collectors that *More Fun* is the scarcest of the major DC titles. Overstreet states "All issues are scarce to rare" (read the fine print at the end of the *More Fun* listing in the current Price Guide). Gary Carter suggests that any superhero book with the corny title *More Fun* was destined to have a short life, competition on the newsstands being what it was in the 1940s... but those 1940-1942 issues were really something special.

Thanks for your interest, I hope you enjoyed this series. ■

Data set

#	Mo/Yr	#Copies
52	Feb 1940	12
53	Mar	14
54	Apr	11
55	May	10
56	Jun	12
57	Jul	9
58	Aug	12
59	Sep	19
60	Oct	6
61	Nov	8
62	Dec	8
63	Jan 1941	12
64	Feb	4
65	Mar	7
66	Apr	8
67	May	6
68	Jun	10
69	Jul	7
70	Aug	8
71	Sep 1941	11
72	Oct	6
73	Nov	5
74	Dec	13
75	Jan 1942	9
76	Feb	9
77	Mar	8
78	Apr	5
79	May	6
80	Jun	11
81	Jul	7
82	Aug	14
83	Sep	16
84	Oct	20
85	Nov	10
86	Dec	21
87	Jan 1943	14
88	Feb	12
89	Mar	12
90	Apr 1943	12
91	May/Jun	8
92	Jul/Aug	9
93	Sep/Oct	7
94	Nov/Dec	7
95	Jan/Feb-44	4
96	Mar/Apr	11
97	May/Jun	7
98	Jul/Aug	*3
99	Sep/Oct	10
100	Nov/Dec	7
101	Jan/Feb-45	15
102	Mar/Apr	11
103	May/Jun	7
104	Jul/Aug	7
105	Sep/Oct	17
106	Nov/Dec	11
107	Jan/Feb-46	11



Basil The Royal Cat #2 (Apr 1953)
©St. John Pub. Co.

Forgotten Funny Animals of the Fifties

by Steve Sibra

In many ways the most interesting period in comics is the early 1950's. The diversity of material on the market then has not been matched before or since. Imagine the young comic fan (or, if you're over 45, you may not need to imagine), dime in hand, standing before the rack of "funny books" at the corner drug store. What to buy? Here are jungle comics with heroines like Sheena or Tiger Girl, westerns featuring movie stars like Tex Ritter or Gene Autry, super heroes, soldiers and spacemen. On the next rack are budding romances, teenage funnymen, big time criminals (both real life and fictional), even those tantalizing horror comics, bringing to mind Mom's warning, "Don't let me catch you reading that junk, young man!" And perhaps as plentiful as anything, there were the funny animal comics, all the favorites from TV and film, and dozens more; obscure, weird, ever-changing.

For a lot of young fans it was the funny-animal books that accompanied them home. Dozens of publishers produced dozens of animal characters, constantly changing-some, dropping others, and for a few short years always, always adding more. There were hogs, frogs, horses and hippos, bluebirds and bison, foxes and fish, hares and bears. Many flew with atomic power; others just seemed to be constantly falling off tall cliffs. In the 50's, the funny-animal genre held something for just about everyone.

In this and future issues of CBM, I'd like to invite you to join me in taking a closer look at some of those obscure 50's critters. Many came and went so fast that they were surely loved one month, a distant memory the next. I've chosen to begin with a couple of the many St. John creations on the funny animal market at the time, namely, *Basil The Royal Cat* and *Kid Carrots*. Both of these anthropomorphic adventurers could be found on newsstands across America in 1953.

Basil was, obviously, a cat. He appeared in four issues of his own book, all published by St. John in 1953. His fur was blue (probably owing to his royal blood) and he wore a crown, a monocle, and spats. He reigned benignly as king of Katameow (except in issue #4, where he is referred to as king of Katalina). Katameow was apparently somewhere in western Europe, bordered on the west by the oppressive totalitarian states of Dogmania and Mouseland. Recurring and central characters in the stories include Basil's butler poodle, Loco the court jester, and Fagin, the prime minister of Katameow and the comic's central villain. As a love interest there is Princess Sweetpuss.

When around the castle, Basil loves to sit back and read comic books. He is also apparently a fan of comic strips, for we see him in issue #2 reading 77 different Sunday papers—but only the funnies, of course.

There are two interesting traits that set Basil apart from most other funny animal characters, and in fact, from many 50's comics in general. First of all, this title (for the first two issues at least) actually has continuity from story to story and even issue to issue! How many funny animal comics can make that claim?

We meet Basil in Katsmeow having adventures as king. Later, wanting fish for dinner, he sets out to catch some in his small rowboat. Stranded at sea, he is picked up by a pilot on his way to America (Hoboken, NJ, to be exact). With no money, Basil goes to work in a carnival, then is befriended by two hoboes and hops a freight for Indianapolis, Indiana. In Indianapolis he drives a car in a race at the Speedway, then continues out west on a train with his two hobo pals, Shorty and Spike. Riding on a stagecoach, Basil soon meets Satchel Sam, and helps him defend his ranch against outlaws and cattle rustlers. Finally, he is returned to Katsmeow.

While these types of adventures are not unique to Basil, bear this in mind: the storyline just recounted takes place over six separate stories, running through the first two issues of Basil's comic. This kind of continuity is almost unheard of in funny animal comics of the fifties, particularly at the beginning of a title run. Even long-standing books like *Superman* usually lacked this degree of continuity. Moreover, while many funny animal comics may have included a story with their characters in, say, a western setting, *most certainly did not bother to give a coherent explanation of how they got there.*

The second unusual characteristic of Basil The Royal Cat common to all four issues, is that the cover always depicts a scene from inside. The covers are sight gags, like most funny animal covers, designed to capture the eye of the potential buyer. But in each case, the covers relate to a scene from the lead story of that issue. Even the bigger-name, long-running funny animal books like the Dell Disneys seldom did this.

Along with Basil and many other funny animal books launched by St. John in 1953, the lone issue of *Kid Carrots* appeared. This is one of those titles you may have seen listed in Overstreet over the years and wondered, "What the heck is that?" Perhaps Mr. Overstreet himself got tired of fielding that question, for beginning in 1989 he began noting "funny animal" next to his listing for this obscure one-shot. Still, if you haven't seen the book, chances are you don't get any sort of mental picture at the mention of the name "Kid Carrots." Of course, probably no one but historians and fans (like me) has ever mentioned it...

Anyway, there's more to Kid Carrots that its listing in the Price Guide that gets in your way when you're trying to find out the value of your copy of *Kid Colt Outlaw* # 3. Kid Carrots is a barrel-chested, sweatshirt-wearing, carrot-scrounging rabbit. His look and his name seem to pin him as a pugilist, though there's no boxing in *Kid Carrots* # 1, save when Honey Bun (Kid's girl) boxes his ears. For the most part, Kid Carrots is a good-hearted but lazy con man, on the make to beat his pal Jumpy out of the contents of his vegetable garden.

Jumpy is the rabbit embodiment of the American work ethic. He slaves day in and day out in his garden, only to have Kid Carrots cart away the fruits of his labors. At last count, Jumpy reports that Kid owes him 93 carrots, 82 turnips, 68 celery stalks, 55 heads of lettuce and one muskmelon. When confronted with this tally, Kid cheerfully retorts, "the world owes me a living."

The only issue of *Kid Carrots* ever published is cover-dated September 1953. It includes a full-page ad for *3-D Mighty Mouse*, which probably signaled the death knell of *Kid Carrots*, *Basil The Royal Cat* and a score of other similar titles at St. John. At this point the publisher threw his hat full-force into the 3-D ring, a move that contributed to the eventual collapse of the company. But of course, that's another story.

I hope you've enjoyed this recap of just a couple of the fabulous 50's short-lived funny animal stars. Keep watching future issues of CBM for the more Forgotten Funny Animals Of The Fifties. ■

***Kid Carrots* #1 (Sep 1953)**

© St. John Pub. Co.

MARKETPLACE MAIL

(Thanks to all who wrote in this last month, the avalanche of mail was incredible. Since we had some longer articles this issue, limited space precluded printing as many letters as I would have preferred. Never the less I read every single letter personally and I appreciate all the heart felt feedback. Your letters mean a lot to us, so thanks for taking the time to write. With the hectic schedules most have these days, having the time to write has become a real luxury. If you do have the time, I'd love to hear from you. Now let's see what readers had to say this month. Editor):

Dear Gary:

As one of the few Australian **comic** book enthusiasts who collects Golden and Silver Age stuff, I read and enjoy every issue of Comic Book Marketplace I can get hold of. The articles are wonderful and obviously written by people who know what they're talking about ... Perhaps you, or some of your contributors, can help me with this query: when I was a kid growing up in the 60's, I remember reading several horror comics my father gave me.

Like a fool, I traded them for some super-hero titles and now I wish to buy them back. The trouble is, I don't know their titles or the issue numbers. But I can remember some of the stories.

STORY ONE: A kind-looking old man wanders into a small town and sees nobody there. He soon finds the community huddled up in the local hall, and the townsfolk quickly invite him in. "Come in quick, there's a werewolf on the loose," they say to the stranger. So he helps the people barricade themselves in the hall, putting up planks across the doors and windows, etc. When night falls, and the moon rises, the stranger goes through a transformation and becomes a werewolf. The townspeople have unwittingly locked themselves in with the monster they were trying to run away from!

STORY TWO: It is dusk in a gothic-type town where vampires are commonplace. A stranger rides into town with a big wooden case and immediately all the citizens become wary of him. "That's a vampire," they think "and he's got his coffin with him." The stranger looks suitably frightening, with black suit and hat and a somber face. The people quickly lock themselves in their houses. The story then zooms in on another resident walking the path on his way home. He hears footsteps behind him and turns to find the stranger stalking him. He runs from him, yelling to his fellow colleagues for help, but no-one's brave enough to come out. Finally, the stranger corners the frightened man, and reaches into his wooden case. He pulls out a wooden stake and plunges it into the man. The final caption and panel explains that the victim was a vampire, and the stranger a professional vampire killer.

STORY THREE: An alien looking creature is warned by his people to leave town as a disaster is about to befall the local town. The creature doesn't believe the stories and decides to stay put. He's wrong of course, and within minutes the sky literally falls on him and he disintegrates in a shower of acid. The last panels reveal the creature was a micro-organism in a human stomach and the "acid" was a pill taken by the human to kill the germs.

Maybe some of the finer details were wrong, as my memory's a bit fuzzy on the stories, but the gist is there. Weren't they great twist endings, though! Better than EC stuff, I thought at the time.

If anyone can tell me where those stories came from, I'd appreciate it greatly. I strongly suspect they were Atlas horror comics. . . .Well, it's been a real pleasure writing this letter. It's my first to CBM, but I don't think it will be my last. Keep up the good work! Yours sincerely,

— Ray Chan, Western Australia

Dear Editor,

Erik Andresens's research on the first one thousand comics was sensational, no actually it was monumental! CBM #13 is an issue I will probably refer to for years to come. In the words of John Berk "Wow, what a magazine".

— Eric A. Mitchell, California

Dear Gary,

I just read your and Pat Calhoun's article the most recent Overstreet (#22) and I wanted to write and say what a great piece of research it was. I never really understood the total relationship between Marvel and Atlas until now. My God some of those Atlas covers are just beautifull I was most startled by the "Atlas Implosion" as you called it. I had no idea that Atlas almost went out of business. Needless to say, I have begun to actively look for Atlas material in my area. I've noticed that most dealers will sell it for less than $5 a book (or even less). I've also realized what you mean about Atlas almost never being available in grades above VG. I've purchased about 35 books in the last few weeks and only one was better than VG (a FN). I'm just now realizing that the White Mountain Copies of Atlas comics must really be something special. Any Atlas with white pages seems to be quite scarce, at least as far as I can see based on my search. Could any of your writers address the issue of why higher grade Atlas are so scarce? I would like to know more on this topic. I also want to say that CBM is the one place I can depend on getting information that I can use as a collector. It seems that an elite group of collectors somehow knows a lot that helps them stay ahead of the market. You might say (at least it's my opinion) that CBM lets us all in on the "inside info". A loyal reader.

— Jim Hussen, Oklahoma

Dear Pat Calhoun,

Just a note to say your column is excellent and I find it to be a continuing source of great information. You've made collecting interesting again by pointing out specific issues that are really great (and even relatively inexpensive). Thanks!

— Greg Macklen, Texas

Dear Erik Andersen,

Your article in the last issue was great, and I agree with your analysis of the low prices of Eastern Color books. I also enjoyed your use of the GOOD price. I think it is much more realistic (and affordable) to try to find these precious items in GOOD than in the higher grades. My personal opinion is that many of the books may not exist in grades higher than GOOD! Please give us more articles along these lines.

— Jason Sanchez, New York

Dear Pat Kochanek,

I've enjoyed your series on the rarity of the DC Golden Age titles very much. It just goes to show you that much of what we think is rare may actually only be rumor or hearsay. I've felt for years that an "establishment" of older collectors continue to "preach" about certain comics that were difficult for them to locate "way back when", but that is not proof that they are rare. Don't get me wrong, I do trust and take into account their opinions, but it should be noted for the record that it is just an opinion. I feel your articles are just the beginning of a whole revolution in determining value. I also feel that eventually price will be tied much more to rarity than "popularity". Keep up the good work CBM, you are absolutely the best magazine out there!

— Ralph H. MacDougal
Massachusetts

Dear Tony Starks,

I love your series on 70s books. It's about time someone focused on these great comics! Everyone seems to forget that 1972 was TWENTY YEARS AGO! That's plenty old for a comic! I've been trying to tell my collector friends about 70s books for years but now I just show them your articles. Do you plan future installments? I for one would like to hear more.

— Allan Epstein, New Jersey

Dear Editor,

I just purchased original copies of Brave And The Bold #34 and Showcase #34 and after finishing them I just had to write. Reading the first Silver Age appearances of the Atom and Hawkman got me thinking that it would be great if CBM would publish a chronological list of Silver Age firsts. Starting with Martian Manhunter and ending with 'who knows who; the article would definitely come in handy to DC Silver Age enthusiasts. A lot of the Silver Age collectors out there are most usually familiar with the 'common' heroes such as Flash, Green Lantern, Legion Of Super-Heroes, etc. Heroes like Rip Hunter, Adam Strange, and the Challengers of the Unknown are a little less easy to bring to mind for their Silver Age firsts. I will be looking forward to hearing what you think and what comes about. Although I have not put in a subscription for CBM, fear not, a copy is in my comic bag the day it comes to my comic shop. CBM is great. Keep it up!

— Michael Engle, Georgia

(Well Mike, I believe the list you may be looking for was published in The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide, 20th Edition, in the article entitled "The Silver Age...The Beginning.." Editor)

Dear Gary,

Thanks for the three back numbers of CBM. Your work has improved so much since those early issues. Layout, size, content; you just keep getting better. Each issue has contained something significant and important. In issue eight that something was Sanchez' remarkable investigation into the 1930s and The Comic Magazine Company. One suggestion to Michael: Next time, please make note of the various people who populated this company. Writer, artist, publishers, etc. And hurry. I'm anxious to see more of your work.

—Robert (no last name given)

Dear Editor,

Please renew my collector's subscription for 12 more issues. I've been with you from the beginning and you've gotten better each issue. I have spent the last three years completing my Silver Age DC collection and your magazine has been very helpful. I have made contact with quite a few of the contributing writers as well as several advertisers. Don't ever stop the articles on the Silver Age of comics! There is a great pleasure in finding all these great comics that I had as a kid—even though they cost so much. Once again, congratulations on you first year of publication and keep up the good work.

—Steve Spence, Texas

(My personal thanks to you and all the folks who have been with us from the beginning. We couldn't do without you! Editor)

Dear Editor,

Enclosed please find my check to renew my subscription to CBM. May I also congratulate you and all of the contributors to CBM on producing a consistently excellent publication! As a long time collector of Timely and Atlas Comics, I have taken particular delight in Pat Calhoun's Adventures Into Weird Worlds. In addition, I'd like to compliment both you and Pat on the great Atlas article that you provided for this year's Overstreet Guide. While the Timely Era and the Marvel Age have been well known to most comic collectors, the "in-between" period that comprises the Atlas years has, until recently, been virtually ignored or so it seemed. Through CBM I've found that there are many other collectors like myself out there, who have discovered the enjoyment, excitement, and sheer fun of Atlas comics. One factor that has contributed to this excitement is the large number and variety of issues put out by Atlas. Starting from *Justice* #7 through the last of the pre-hero Marvels, the total number of issues published exceeds 3000! After collecting Atlas comics for over 25 years and accumulating over 1500 of the rascals there are still literally hundreds of issues that I have never even seen ! Talk about a Journey Into Unknown Worlds!

A second factor that has made collecting Atlas comics enjoyable is that, until fairly recently, they have been relatively inexpensive. I fondly recall buying *Marvel Boy* #1 for $4.00 and *Strange Tales* #1 for $8 (a major investment back in those days!). When average grade EC's were fetching $20 a piece, most Atlas comics could be had for a dollar or two. Even today many of the non-horror titles can be bought in VG for just a few dollars. Unlike many other publishers, with Atlas comics the challenge is in finding the books rather than in just affording them. Walking into just about any comic show these days, anybody with a wallet full of cash could fill complete runs of practically any Marvel Title, but he'd be lucky to come away with more than a handful of Atlas comics. I look forward to more articles on Atlas....in particular, I'd love to hear about any other details concerning the Atlas Implosion that you might have been able to pry out of Stan Lee. It has always been a fascinating event for me (pretty dull life, eh?) and is really the birth of the modern Marvel Comics Group.

While Human Torch #14 has been identified as the first book to carry an Atlas Globe, another question of interest is what was the last comic published under the Atlas emblem. There is at least one Atlas book that had an October, 1957 cover date...Dippy Duck #1 (Anybody laughing about such a goofy title should know that this book features cover-to-cover Joe Maneely artwork! !). Judging from the Atlas story codes in this book (those little letter plus 3-digit codes that usually appeared in the first story panel), much of the art for this book was actually prepared a couple of months before September, 1957 cover-dated books. It also is interesting to note that while many Atlas titles started to disappear in May, June, and July of 1957, several *first* issues appeared in September and October of 1957. Another interesting book from this time period is Cartoon Kids #1, which bears the Atlas Globe and no cover date. The Atlas Story Codes for this book are actually higher than those on books dated for November of 1957. In

addition, this first issue actually says "No. 1" on the cover. I don't believe that any other Atlas first issue (including Dippy Duck #1) had the number on its cover. This practice was, however, used after the Atlas globe was dropped (such as on Strange Worlds #1, Tales of Suspense #1, and Tales to Astonish #1). Now for some conjecture.... After October the Atlas globe above the Title Banner was replaced with "IND." Since this triangular area is actually a different color from the rest of the cover on the November, 1957 issues, it's possible that a triangle with the "IND." was pasted over the Atlas globe on covers that were prepared before the Ax fell. Cartoon Kids #1 may well have been issued in November or December of 1957 and the "IND." sticker may have fallen off the Cover artwork. So Cartoon Kids #1 may be the last Atlas or the first Marvel first issue. All of this is probably exceptionally boring to all but the most hard-core of Atlas collectors, but it does make for some interesting (yep, a very dull life!) speculation. Well, that's it for now. Keep up the terrific work on CBM!

John Albernas
—Worcester, Massachusetts

(Pat and I thank all of you for the feedback on the Overstreet article. I enjoyed your "conjectures" on Atlas history very much. In fact, Pat and I nominate you to write an Atlas article for a future issue of CBM. How about it? Editor)

Dear Gary:

Thanks for printing my last letter. Keep up the good work, CBM is the best thing going for the serious comic book collector/investor/dealer. I am again writing to BEG you to do a comprehensive article on mail order purchasing.

I am sure the CBM could have a huge impact in this area of comicdom. Dishonest mail order dealers need to know . . . that in the long run they only hurt themselves as they hurt the entire industry. . . .Please let me know what you think.

—Bill Milano, California

(I made what I believe to be a small start. Check out an essay entitled "A Word About Mail Order" in the new Overstreet Grading Guide. CBM is planning a whole series entitled "Mail Order Madness" by yours truly. I plan to discuss all sides of the mail order process . Yes, there are a few bad eggs that make it hard for everyone. I think it's interesting that among those who are hurt the most by dishonest mail order merchants are the large number of honest dealers. Think of what they have to go through to reassure potential customers that they are members of the the "good guy league". Editor)

Dear Gary,

Congratulations on a fine first year! The letters pages are always loaded with praise about CBM, and justly so. Having been a collector since 1969, at age five, to present, CBM is by far and away the best. Oh, what I would have given in the 70's for CBM! Every issue is a treat. Excellent, informative, articles by people who are obviously knowledgeable. and the ads! The material offered in CBM, **every month**, is monumental! I just love to read an article or market report on one page, telling me how scarce so many comics are, or are becoming. Then I flip a page or two and there's an ad, or maybe two or three even! Loaded with what I want! High-grade Silver and Gold! A ritual-trance overcomes me. Like a kid counting pennies for bubble-gum, I start counting dollars for comics. Out comes the check book. Nope. Not what next - What can I sell!!

Obviously, it's time to calm down. Reality of bill's hits home. Can it be that I can only buy one of those old *Tales Of Suspense*?!! But there are four I need, and high grade, and so scarce! I may never get another chance! But I can get time-payments! I'm saved!

Now it's time to wait for the next issue of CBM. And my next unemployment check... or maybe I'll win the lottery...

P.S. Another year please, enclosed check. And don't be so concerned about a price increase, Gary. You've developed a large following who will continue with CBM. The over all attitude of CBM is the direct reflection of its contributors; a magic that will continue because of an honest, nostalgic, love of our hobby.

— Guy Bartleson, Alaska

(Thanks for the encouragement Guy, it is much appreciated. And your right, the credit for CBM goes to our contributors. When someone really loves his "funny Books" it's easy to tell. , without whom we couldn't exist. Editor)

Dear Gary, Lisa and Son,

Please renew my subscription via letter as I wished not to clip the coupon. (Shame on the invitation that such a thing be done.) I will not praise you, for surely you grow weary of it; even though deserved it be; but I do want to thank you, not only for myself, but more so for the shut-ins, physically-impaired, and others for whom your publication like comic looks is a temporary haven from the pains of life. Please know that you are doing more good than you may suspect. Also, I would go. Ha! Ha!

—Joe Smejkal, Texas

Write to Letters to the Editor
c/o CBM

FANDOM *FLASH*BACKS

by Erik Andresen

The following ad appeared in the COMICOLLECTOR #10 way back in 1963.
The amazing thing about it is not only the price of the comics,
but the fact that they all had equal value in from the veiw point of the advertiser. E.A.

"WANT: *BRAVE & BOLD* 1-27, 30-38,40;
SHOWCASE 1-30,33-35, *JLA* 1,5,6...
will pay 5 cents a comic." –Bill Warders